

## CONTENTS

Vol. XXXIII	January - June 2007	No. 1 & 2
'Sangita Kalanidhi' Madurai Shri T. N. Sheshagopalan's Speech .....	5	
Shri Muthuswamy Dikshithar and his Contribution To Carnatic Music contd. from prev. issue.		
Prof. S.R. Janakiraman .....	11	
Niraval Singing by Suguna Purushoththaman .....	15	
"Mukthamma is no more, long live the Dhanammal Bani" by Kripa Subramaniam .....	19	
The Legacy Lives On - Interview with Sangita Kala Acharya Seetha Rajan by Radha Namboodiri .....	22	
Irayimman Thampi-Doyen Among Kerala Composers by Dr. S. Bhagyalekshmy .....	28	
Mokshamu Galada by Shyamala Sajani .....	33	
Music is her Lifeblood - Interview with Suguna Varadachari by Sudha Subramaniam .....	35	
Percussions In Carnatic Music Concerts - A Retrospect by Layakala Prathibhamani Vidwan H.S. Sudhindra .....	37	
Pamper Yourself With Music by Dr. T. V. Sairam .....	39	
Homage - Shri S. Seshadri by 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan .....	42	
Homage - Shri Sadanand Shetty by V. Shankar .....	43	
Homage - Smt. Mangalam Muthuswamy by Saipriya Vishwanathan .....	44	
Book Review by Jyothi Mohan .....	46	



## Sri Shanmukhananda

FINE ARTS & SANGEETHA SABHA

292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg, Sion (E), Mumbai - 400 022.

Tel.: 2407 8888 ● Fax : 2409 2211

E-mail: shanmugananda@hotmail.com ● Website: www.shanmukhananda.org.in

### SANGEETHA VIDYALAYA & MAGAZINE COMMITTEE (2006 - 2007)

#### Member

Shri V. S. Amarnath Sury (Convenor)

Shri Jayaram Mani                      Smt. Kalyani Sharma  
Smt. Subhadra Murthy                Shri V. Krishnamurthy  
Smt. Radha Namboodiri

#### Patrons

Shri T. N. Krishnan                      Shri Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman

#### Editorial Advisory Board

Shri Garland N. Rajagopalan                Shri T. K. Govinda Rao  
Smt. Kalyani Sharma                      Shri Nedunuri Krishnamurthy  
Smt. Padma Varadan                      Dr. V. V. Srivatsa  
Shri T. R. Subramanyam                      Dr. Sulochana Rajendran

#### Editor

Smt. Sudha Subramaniam

#### Sangeetha Vidyalaya - Director & Principal

Smt. Radha Namboodiri

## Report

Veenarpanam by an ardent Veena Lover.....	48
Mahaswami Sangeethanjali .....	50
Sri Shanmukhananda National Eminence Award .....	51
Happenings at the Vidyalaya by Nalini Dinesh.....	53

Life Subscription : Rs. 500/-      Annual Subscription : Rs. 40/-      Price per copy : Rs. 10/-

The views expressed in Shanmukha are the writer's own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Editor / Publisher. It may please be noted that articles sent to Shanmukha for publication will not be returned.

Printed and Published by Shri Jayaram Mani on behalf of Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha (Regd.) and Printed at Kalpana Art Printers, A-14, Shalimar Industrial Estate, Matunga Labour Camp, Mumbai - 400 019 and Published from Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha (Regd.), Plot No. 292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg, Sion (East), Mumbai - 400 022/

Editor : Smt. Sudha Subramaniam, Registered with Registrar of Newspapers for India. R. N. No. 2793875

## Form IV

(See Rule 8 of Press & Registration of Book Act)

- Place of Publication : Sri Shanmukhananda Bharatiya Sangeetha Vidyalaya, Plot H, Bhaudaji Road Extension, Sion (W), Mumbai - 400 022.
- Periodicity of Publication : Quarterly
- Printer's Name & Address : Kalpana Art Printers  
14-A, Shalimar Industrial Estate,  
Next to Tata Power House, Matunga, Mumbai - 400 019.
- Publisher's Name : Shri Jayaram Mani  
Nationality : Indian  
Address : No. 6, Chedda Bldg., Matunga, Mumbai - 400 019.
- Editor's Name : Smt. Sudha Subramaniam  
Nationality : Indian  
Address : G-1, Om Shubh Milan, Dixit Cross Road,  
Vile-Parle (E), Mumbai - 400 057.
- Name and Address of individuals who own the Newspaper and Partners or Share-holders Holding More than one percent of the capital : Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha (Regd.),  
Plot No. 292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg,  
Sion (E), Mumbai - 400 022.

I, Jayaram Mani, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and behalf.

## IN FOCUS

Even as we present this issue of Shanmukha for January - June 2007 with some delay, we profusely apologize to our respected and learned readers for the interruption that has occurred in the continuous flow of issues. There were some unavoidable reasons, foremost of which was Seshadri Mama's illness to which he ultimately succumbed. He had efficiently co-ordinated all aspects of bringing out the issues on time. His departure has left a void. We hope to streamline the machinery so that future issues are published on time.

This issue opens with the Presidential address of Sangita Kalanidhi Madurai Shri T. N. Sheshagopalan delivered at the inauguration of the annual conference of the Music Academy, Chennai on 15-12-2006. This is followed by the second part of the article on the contributions of Muthuswami Dikshitar to Carnatic Music. Among others, there is an interesting article on one of Kerala's well-known composers by Dr. S. Bhagyalekshmi, an article on Niraval Singing by Smt. Suguna Purushothaman, one on music therapy by Dr. T. V. Sairam and the usual features of Interviews, Book Review and reports.

This issue also carries tributes to Muktha Amma, Shri S. Seshadri and Smt. Mangalam Muthuswamy whose passing away is a great loss to the music world. □

A tradition of Quality, Trust and Reliability  
for over a Hundred years



Godrej Industries Limited



FATTY ALCOHOL  
FATTY ACID  
SURFACTANTS  
GLYCERIN

Godrej Industries Limited (GIL) is a part of the Godrej Group, a \$1.4 billion conglomerate. GIL is India's leading manufacturer of oleochemicals and makes more than a hundred chemicals for use in over two dozen industries. GIL has built a strong manufacturing base capable of delivering international quality products at competitive prices. It operates two plants, one at Valia, Gujarat and the other at Vishakh, Mumbai. GIL's products are exported to over 40 countries around the globe.

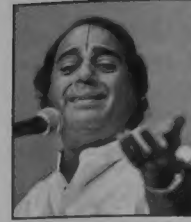
Our chemicals help make life beautiful!

W.D. & H.O. WILLS  
PROCESSED  
FABRIC CONDITIONER  
VAPOR MURDER  
WASHING MURDER  
WASHING MURDER  
WASHING MURDER

W.D. & H.O. WILLS  
WASHING MURDER  
WASHING MURDER  
WASHING MURDER  
WASHING MURDER  
WASHING MURDER

W.D. & H.O. WILLS  
WASHING MURDER  
WASHING MURDER  
WASHING MURDER  
WASHING MURDER  
WASHING MURDER

W.D. & H.O. WILLS  
WASHING MURDER  
WASHING MURDER  
WASHING MURDER  
WASHING MURDER  
WASHING MURDER



Presidential Address of Sangeetha Kalanidhi Madurai T. N. Seshagopalan delivered on 15-12-2006 at the Annual Conference of the Music Academy, Chennai.

சென்னை சங்கீத வித்வத் சபையின் 80-வது ஆண்டு மஹாநாட்டின் தலைவர் வித்வான் மதுரை டி.என். சேஷகோபாலன் அவர்களின் தலைமை உரை (15-12-2006)

दोर्भयुक्ता चतुर्भिः स्फटिक मणिमयी-मक्षमालां दधाना  
हस्तेनैकेन पद्मं सितमपि च शुक्लं पुस्तकं चापरेण।  
भासा कुन्देन्दु-शंखस्फटिक-मणिनिभा भासमानाऽसमाना  
सा मे वाग्देवतेयं निवसतु वदने सर्वदा सुप्रसन्ना ॥

மென்மை தங்கிய இந்த சங்கீத வித்வத் சபையின் 80-வது ஆண்டு சங்கீத மஹாநாட்டினைத் துவக்கி வைக்க வருகை தந்திருக்கும் சென்னை உயர் நீதி மன்றத்தின் தலைமை நீதிபதி மேதகு ஏ.பி. ஷா அவர்களே, வித்வத் சபையின் தலைவர் ஸ்ரீமான் என். முரளி அவர்களே, சபையின் அங்கத்தினர்களே, வித்வான்களே, விதூஷிகளே, ரசிகப் பெருமக்களே உங்கள் எல்லோருக்கும் என் பணிவான நமஸ்காரத்தை தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறேன்.

சங்கீத வித்வத் சபையின் 80-வது ஆண்டு மஹாநாட்டினை தலைமை தாங்கி நடத்தும் பொறுப்பினை எனக்களித்த சபையின் தலைவர் ஸ்ரீமான் என். முரளி, நிர்வாகிகள் மற்றும் அனைத்து அங்கத்தினர்களுக்கும் என் நன்றியை தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறேன்.

அடியேனுடைய பரம குரு காயக சிகாமணி டாக்டர் ஹரிகேசநல்லூர் முத்தையா பாகவதர் அவர்களையும் மற்றும் சங்கீத மஹா மேதைகளையும் அலங்கரித்து, அடியேனையும் தேடி வந்திருக்கும் இந்த மஹா கௌரவத்தினை காலம் சென்ற என் குருநாதர் இராமணாதபுரம் ஸ்ரீ சி.எஸ். சங்கரசிவ பாகவதர் அவர்களது திருவடித் தாமரையில் சமர்ப்பித்து நமஸ்கரிக்கிறேன்.

இந்த வித்வத் சபை உலகில் சாஸ்த்ரிய சங்கீதத்தினை போற்றி வளர்த்து சேவை செய்து

கொண்டிருக்கும் புகழ் பெற்ற அனேக சபைகளுக்கு முன்னோடியாகவும், வளரும் கலைஞரிலிருந்து மஹா வித்வான்கள் வரை அனைவரும் மரியாதைபுடனும், மதிப்புடனும் சங்கீத தேவதையை மனதில் நிலைநிறுத்திப் படிப்பதிடின் நாத ஆராதனை செய்து வரும் வித்வத் பீடமாகவும் விளங்கி வருகிறது.

1970-ஆம் ஆண்டில் சங்கீத கலாநிதி முடிசொண்டான் வெங்கடராம அய்யர் செய்த ஸிம்ஹநந்தனப் பல்லவி வெக்சர் / டெமான்ஸ்ட்ரேஷனைப் பார்த்து, கேட்டு, அனுபவித்து, ரசித்து, பரமித்து நின்றேன். அன்று இந்த ஸதஸின் வித்வத்பரமான கௌரவத்தினையும், நிஜசங்கீத ஸாதனையின் அடையாளத்தினையும் ப்ரத்யக்ஷமாகக் கண்டு கொண்டேன். இந்த வித்வத் சபையில் பாடும் பாக்கியத்தினை நாம் அடைவோமா என்று கனவு கண்ட எனக்கு இந்த கௌரவம் கிடைத்திருப்பதன் காரணம் குருவருளும், திருவருளும், என் பெற்றோர்களும், முன்னோர்களும் செய்த தவமும், ஆசிரியையும் தவிர வேறு எதுவும் இல்லையென திடமாக நம்புகிறேன்.

என் தாயார் அரவணைப்புடன் போதனை செய்த பக்தி சங்கீதத்துடன், நாம் சங்கீர்த்தனமும் இணைந்து, லக்ஷ்ய ப்ரதானமான இசை வாழ்வு என் ஏழாவது வயதிலிருந்து துவங்கியது. தரம் மிகுந்த சங்கீதத்தை நன்கு கேட்டு, லக்ஷ்யமாகக் க்ரஹித்து கொள்வதற்கு ஹேதுவாக என்னுடைய பள்ளி நாட்களில் மதுரை நகரில் மேதைகளின் கச்சேரிகள் அபரிமிதமாக நடைபெற்றன. 'கேள்விகள் நிறைந்த ஞானத்திலேயே பாடிக்கொண்டிருந்த எனது 'பக்தி ராஜ்ஜனி' இசை நிகழ்ச்சிக்கு 1960-ஆம் ஆண்டு கும்பகோணத்தில், வயலின் மேதை சங்கீத கலாநிதி கும்பகோணம் ஸ்ரீ ராஜயாணிக்கம் பிள்ளை தலைமை

தாங்கி ஆசீர்வதித்தார். அவர் தம் தலைமை உரையில்

“இந்தக் குழந்தையின் இசை லக்ஷ்யத்துடன் நின்று விடக் கூடாது, லக்ஷணமும் சேர்ந்து விட்டால் இறைவன் ஸ்ருஷ்டியில் நல்ல ரூபத்திற்கு அறிவும் ஞானமும் ஒருங்கே நிலைபெற்று விளங்குமாப் போலும், ஸ்வர்ண புஷ்பம் வாசனை பெற்றது போலும் ஆகும். இசை உலகிற்கு நல்ல வித்வான் கிடைப்பான்” - எனக் கூறி ஆசீர்வதித்து அவரது நெடுங்கால நண்பராகிய என் குருநாதரின் பெருமையை அந்த மேடையில் பறைசாற்றி அடியேனை என் குருநாதரின் அருளுக்கு பாத்திரமாவதற்கு வழி காட்டினார்.

என் லக்ஷ்ய ப்ரதானமான இசையில் லக்ஷண ஞானம் சேர்வதற்கு ஆற்றுப் படுத்திய அந்த மஹாணையும் என்னை என் குருநாதரிடம் கொண்டு சேர்த்த ஸத்த்ஹ்ருதயம் படைத்த ஸர்வஜ்ஞோபகாரி, பரம ரசிக சிரோமணி, (காலஞ்சென்ற) ராமேஸ்வரம் ஸ்ரீமத கோடு ராஜகோபால் சாஸ்த்ரி என்னும் கனவானையும் இன்று மனதில் த்யானித்து நமஸ்கரிக்கிறேன்.

குருவின் திருவடிகளை த்யானித்து பயிற்சி பெற துவங்கி ஒன்றரை வருட காலத்துக்குள்ளேயே நான் நான்கு மணி நேரத்திற்கு Full Fledged Concerts ஆகப் பாடி ரசிகர்களை திருப்தி செய்து வெற்றி காணும் போக்யதாம்சத்தை என் குருநாதர் எனக்கு அனுகூலம் செய்து அருளினார்.

போதிப்பதற்காகவே அவதாரம் செய்தார்போலும், மேலோங்கிய மிகுந்த த்யாக உணர்வுடனும் தன் வாழ்க்கை முறையை நடத்திக் கொண்டு மாணாக்கர்களாக வத்வர்களை தன் புதல்வர்களாக ஏற்றுக் கொண்டு, வித்தை கற்பித்து, அவர்களை மற்றொரு குருவாகவும், உயர்ந்த கலைஞர்களாகவும் உருவாக்கி சங்கீத உலகத்திற்கு பெருபுகாரம் செய்த என் குருநாதர் இராமநாதபுரம் ஸ்ரீ சி.எஸ். சங்கரகிரிவ பாகவதர் அவர்களை பற்றிக் கூறுகிறேன்.

குருநாதரின் தந்தை இராமநாதபுரம் ஸ்ரீ சித்தபை சேர்வை அவர்களும், மருதங்கம் கஞ்சிரா - மஹா

வித்வான் புதுக்கோட்டை ஸ்ரீ தக்ஷிணாமூர்த்தி பிள்ளை அவர்களும் ஒருங்கே அந்நாளில் ‘வயச் சிற்பி’ புதுக்கோட்டை ஸ்ரீமான் பூண்டியா பிள்ளை அவர்களிடம் குருகுலவாசம் செய்தவர்கள். இராமநாதபுரம் ஸ்ரீ ‘பூச்சி’ சீனிவாஸ அய்யங்காருக்கு குருநாதரின் தந்தை ‘செட்’ மிருதங்கம்.

(காலஞ்சென்ற மருதங்க மேதை, பத்மஸ்ரீ இராமநாதபுரம் சி.எஸ். முருகபூபதி அவர்கள் குருநாதரின் தம்பியும், சிஷ்யரும் ஆவார். குருநாதரின் மருதங்க பாணியானது, புதுக்கோட்டை தக்ஷிணாமூர்த்தி பிள்ளை, கும்பகோணம் அழகியநம்பியாப் பிள்ளை ஆகிய இருவரது பாணிகளையும் அறிந்து, ஆராய்ந்து, கலந்து அமைக்கப் பெற்ற அழகும், கம்பீரமும் நிறைந்த பாணி ஆகும்.

வய வாத்யங்கள் வாசிப்பது, போதிப்பது, வய சாதனை புரிவது ஆகியவை பரம்பரை சொத்தாகப் பெற்ற குருநாதருக்கு இயற்கையில் இசை ஞானமும், சாரீர சம்பத்தும் அமையப் பெற்ற காரணத்தினாலும், அவ்வமயம் ஆட்சி செய்த அரசர் முத்துராமலிங்க சேதுபதி குருநாதரை காயகசிகாமணி டாக்டர் ஹரிகேசநல்லூர் முத்தையா பாகவதர் அவர்களிடம் குருகுலவாசம் செய்ய அனுப்பினார். 16 ஆண்டு காலம் குருகுலவாசம் முடிந்த பின் இராமநாதபுரம் ‘பூச்சி’ அய்யங்காரின் காலத்திற்குப் பின்) இராமநாதபுரம் சமஸ்தானத்தின் ஆஸ்தான வித்வான் பதவி அளிக்கப்பட்டு கௌரவிக்கப்பட்டார்.

வாய்ப்பாட்டு, வீணை, வயலின், புல்லாங்குழல், மருதங்கம், கஞ்சிரா, கொன்னக்கோல் மற்றும் ஜலதரங்கம் எல்லாவற்றையும் நிபுணத்தவத்துடன் கூடிய வித்வத்தபரமான போதனை செய்து சேவை செய்தவர் என் குருநாதர்.

சிறு வயதிலிருந்தே வாத்யங்கள் வாசிப்பதில் ஆர்வமும், திறமையும், இயற்கையான பக்தியும் அமைந்த எனக்கு என் குருநாதரின் அனுகூலமும், போதனையும் தான் நான் வீணைக் கலைஞராக உருவெடுத்த காரணம்.

வாய்ப்பாட்டுக் கலைஞருக்கு வீணை ஞானமும்,

வீணைக் கலைஞருக்கு வாய்ப்பாட்டு ஞானமும் அத்யாவஸ்யமாகும். தெய்வ வீணையாம், சாரீரத்திலிருந்து வெளிப்படும் சங்கீத சப்தத்தின் ஏற்றத்தினை ஆதி சங்கரர்.

विष्णु गायन्ति विविधमपदानं पशुपते-

स्वयारब्धो वक्तुं चलिताशिरसा साधुवचने ।

तदीयैर्माधुर्यैरपलपितन्त्रीकलखां

निजां वीणां वाणी निचुलयति चोलेन निभृतम् ॥

என்ற செளந்தர்யவஹரி ஸ்லோகத்தில் “அம்பாளின் கண்டத்திலிருந்து பிறந்து, உச்சரிக்கப்பட்ட சங்கீத ஸ்பூர்த்தியான ஆஹாகாரம், வீணாகானம் செய்து கொண்டிருந்த சரஸ்வதியை வெட்கித் தலைகுனியச் செய்து விட்டது” என அருளியிருக்கிறார்.

குரலெடுத்துப் பாடும் வீணை தெய்வம், வீணை போல் ஒலிக்கும் வாய்ப்பாட்டு தெய்வீகம்.

லக்ஷியம் அமிதமாகவும், லக்ஷணம் மிதமாகவும், அழகாகவும் ஆனால் ஆணித்தரமாகவும் வெளிப்படுத்தி, அவரவர்க்கு ஏற்ற ஸ்ருதியுடனும், ராக பாவ ஸ்பூர்த்தியை கன நய பரிமாணங்களுடனும், மத்யம கால ப்ரதானமாகப் பாடி ரசிகர்களை மகிழ்விக்கும் இசை, ரசிகர்களின் மனதில் என்றும் நீங்கா இடத்தைப் பெற்று விளங்கும்.

ஸ்ரீமத் ராமாயணத்தில் ஆஞ்சநேய ஸ்வாமி ராம லக்ஷமணர்களைப் பார்த்து முதலில் பேசும் சந்தர்ப்பத்தில் “உச்சஸ்தாயியிலேயோ அல்லது மிகவும் குறைந்த ஸ்ருதியிலோ இல்லாமல் நடுத்தரமான குரலெடுத்து அதி வேகமாகவோ அல்லது தாமதமாகவோ இல்லாமலும், சந்தேகத்திற்கு இடமில்லாமலும், மங்களகரமாகவும் மனதை கவர்வதுமாகிய பேச்சை பேசியதாக வால்மீகியாகிய கோகிலம் கூவியிருக்கிறது.

இதையே கம்ப நாட்டாழ்வாரும்

“ஆற்றலும் நிறைவும் கல்வி அமைதியும் அறிவும் என்னும்

வேற்றுமை இவனோடில்லையாம்

என விளம்பலுற்றான்”

“இல்லாத உலகத்து எங்கும் இங்கு

அவன் இசை கூடக்

கல்லாத கலையும் வேத கடலுமே

என்னும் காட்சி

சொல்லாலே தோன்றிற்றன்றே - யார் சொல்

இச்சொல்லின் செவ்வன்

விரிஞனோ விடைவல்லானோ?”

- என சாதிக்கிறார்.

ராக சங்கீதமாகிய நமது சங்கீதத்தில் விதரணையுடன் ராக ஆலாபனை செய்து ரசிகர்களை ஆனந்தப்படுத்தும் கலைஞர் ரசிகர்களின் மனதிலும், நினைவிலும் வீற்றிருப்பார்.

விஸ்தாரமாக ராக ஆலாபனை செய்யும் பொழுது நன்கு நீண்ட கார்வைகள் கொடுத்து சத்தங்கீத வாக்கியங்களை அபிப்பிராயங்களாகவும், முழுமையாகவும் நாதப்ரவாஹமாக சேர்த்து, இணைத்து, அமைத்துப் பாடும் கலைஞரை நாதஸ்வர பாணியில் பாடுகிறாரே என விமர்சிக்கும் பழக்கம் உருவாகியிருக்கிறது. நாதஸ்வர மேதையான மன்னார்சூரி சின்னப் பக்கிரி, திருவாடுதுறை ராஜரத்தினம் பிள்ளை ஆகியோர் காயக மேதையாகிய கோனேரிராஜபுரம் வைத்யநாத அய்யர், வாய்ப்பாட்டு முறையை வயலின் வாத்யத்தில் ஏற்ற வைத்த திருக்கோடக்காவல் க்ருஷ்ணய்யர் இவர்களிடம் சிணை பெற்றவர்கள் தானே?

சென்ற நூற்றாண்டில் பழைய தலைமுறை கலைஞர்கள், ராக ஆலாபனை நீண்ட கார்வைகளுடன் செய்யும் பொழுது குரல், குழல் இரண்டு பாணிகளும் ஒரே பாணியாகத் தான் இருந்திருக்க வேண்டும்.

ஒரு முறை திருச்சூரில் எனது நீண்ட நேர சங்கராபரண ஆலாபனையைக் கேட்டு மகிழ்ந்து ஆசீர்வதித்த மஹா மேதை செம்மங்குடி ஸ்ரீனிவாச அய்யர் அவர்கள் “இப்படி நின்று பாடற லாகவத்தையும், பாணியையும் இவா இதை சொல்லா, அவா அதை எழுதறா என்று மாத்திக்கவே மாத்திக்காதே. கார்வையுள்ள பாட்டு காதை



நிறைக்கும். இதற்கு மேலும் நாதஸ்வரம் மாதிரி இருக்குன்னு சொன்னால் பெருமைப் படு. நான் அப்படித்தான் பெருமைப்படுவேன்" என்று சொன்னார்.

மேலை நாட்டு இசை முறைகளுக்குப் புலன்களை மகிழ்விக்கும் தன்மை தான் ப்ரதானம். நமது பாரத சங்கீதம் அதிலும் கர்நாடக சம்ப்ரதாய சங்கீதம் - செவிக்கும், அறிவிற்கும், மனதிற்கும் முடிவில் ஆத்மாவிற்கும் - ஆத்மாவை மோகி வித்திக்கும் கீர்த்தனம் செய்பவரையும் சுவணம் செய்பவரையும் ஒருங்கே கொண்டு சேர்க்கும் தன்மைத்து என நம் முன்னோர்கள் உபதேசத்தினாலும், அனுபவத்தினாலும் சாதித்துச் சென்றிருக்கிறார்கள். மற்ற தவங்களுக்கும் யோகங்களுக்கும் இல்லாத மேன்மை சங்கீர்த்தனத்திற்கு உண்டு என்பதை

नाहं वसामि वैकुण्ठे नयोगिहृदये खौ।

मद्वक्ता यत्र गायन्ति तत्र तिष्ठामि नारद ॥

என பகவான் நாதர்க்கு சொல்லும் போல் சொல்லும் எல்லோரும் போதிகிறதே.

குழந்தைகளின் காதுகளில் ஒழுங்கற்ற ஒசைகள் ஏறி சீர்த்திற்கும், மனத்திற்கும் ஊறு விளைவிக்கும் முன்னமேயே நம் முன்னோர்கள் போதித்திருக்கும் உன்னத சங்கீர்த்தன முறையை விளையாட்டாக ஏற்றுவது நம் கடமையாகும். நர்சரி ரைம்ஸ் பாடும் இளந்துளிகள், அவர்கள் மனதறிந்து போதிக்கப்பட்டால் "ச்யாமளே மீனாஷி", "வரலீலகாளவோலா" போன்ற வடிவங்களை விரும்பி பாடுவார்கள்.

வித்தையும், விளையுமும் ஒருங்கே பெறுவதற்கு குருகுலவாசம் முறையில் இசைக்கல்வி அமைவது அவசியம். பள்ளி முறையில் நிச்சயம் அறிவு பெறலாம், அறிவின் அடுத்த நிலைகளை அடைவது குருவின் உபதேசத்தாலும், அனுஷ்டானத்தாலும், நடைமுறையில் கண்டு, புரிந்து, க்ரஹித்து எடுத்துக் கொள்ளும் பாடங்களாலும் தான்.

படித்து, தெரிந்து, புரிந்து, அறிந்து கொள்ளும் அறிவானது, அனுபவம் என்னும் பட்டை தீட்டப்பட

பிறகு தான், ஞானம் எனும் ஒளியுடன் மிளர்கிறது.

ஞானம் என்ற பாதையை எளிதில் விரைவில் உணர்வதற்கு அனுபவம் மிக்க முன்னோர்கள், முன்னோடிகள் மற்றும் மேதைகளின் சத்சங்கமும், அவர்களின் அறிவுரைகளை கேட்டு நடத்தலும் ஆகும் - என்பதை இளைய தலைமுறைக் கலைஞர்கள் மனதில் இருத்திக் கொள்ள வேண்டும்.

முன்னோர்களால் அரும்பாடுபட்டு வளர்க்கப்பட்ட நமது கர்நாடக சங்கீதத்தில் கல்பிதமாக இருந்தாலும், மனோதர்மமாக இருந்தாலும், சம்ப்ரதாயம் என்ற அஸ்திவாரத்தின் மேல் அமைத்துக் கொள்ளும் இசை மாளிகை தான் என்றும் நிலைத்து நிற்கும்.

"Sampradaya" is the resultant of constant research made for decades, rather centuries and the powerful resultant has stayed, has been staying and will stay.

இசைக்கு மாற்றங்கள் தேவை தான். அவை ஏற்றங்களாக அமைதல் வேண்டும். எக்காலத்திற்கும் ஏற்றவாறு மாறி கொண்ட மாற்றங்கள் ஏற்றங்களாகவே திகழும். கல்பித சங்கீத ஞானத்தை சீரிய முறையில் பெற்றால் தான் மனோதர்மசங்கீதம் சீர்பட அமையும்.

நமது சங்கீதத்தில் ராகத்தின் லக்ஷண லக்ஷிய சம்ப்ரதாயங்களுக்கு, க்ருதிகள் என்னும் கோவில்கள் மூலம் வடிவமைத்து ராகஸ்வரூபங்களை ப்ரதர்சனம் செய்யும் சந்நிதிகளாக அம்ச, ந்யாச யுக்திகளை உத்தராரணம் செய்தவர்கள் சங்கீத மும்பூர்த்திகள்.

மும்பூர்த்திகளின் கீர்த்தனைகளையும் மற்றும் ஆன்மோரர்களின் இசை வடிவங்களையும் பாடாந்தரங்களையும் நிச்சயம் செய்து அனுபவம் மிக்க வித்வான்களை கொண்டு Archives செய்து வித்வான்களுக்கு உதவி, கல்பித சங்கீதத்தை செவ்வனே காப்பது இசை ஸ்தாபனங்களின் தலையாய கடமை ஆகும்.

இளைய தலைமுறைக் கலைஞர்கள் எல்லோரும்

புத்திசாலிகள். சீர்தூக்கிப் பார்த்துச் செயல்படும் அறிவும் அதற்கேற்ற Exposure-உம் கிடைத்திருக்கிறது. இவ்வாறு நல்ல குழ்நிலைகள் அமைந்திருக்கும் பொழுது இசையை தொழில் ரீதியில் எடுத்துக் கொண்டு 'தொழிலில் வெற்றி' என்று மட்டும் நின்று விடாமல் அழுத்தமான சம்ப்ரதாய சங்கீதத்தை, நல்ல 'வித்வத் சப்தத்தோடு பாடியும், அடுத்த தலைமுறைகளுக்கும் நல்ல ரசிக்களை உருவாக்கப் பாடுபட வேண்டுமெனவும், இளைய தலைமுறைக் கலைஞர்களைக் கேட்டுக் கொள்கிறேன்.

ராகம், தானம், பல்லவி, நிரவல் அம்சங்கள் இல்லாமல் அமையும் கர்நாடக கச்சேரிகள் எவ்வளவு கவர்ச்சியாக அமைந்தாலும் முகம் இல்லாத சரீரம் போன்றது தான். கொடுக்கப்பட்ட நேரத்தை நிர்வாகம் செய்து, பொறுத்தமாக சபைக்கேற்றவாறு ராகம், தானம், பல்லவி விபரங்கள் குன்றாமல் பாடி சம்ப்ரதாயத்தினை கட்டிக் காப்பது ப்ரபலமடைந்த வித்வான்களின் முக்கியமான பொறுப்பு என்று எண்ணுகிறேன்.

பெரும்பாலும் ஹரிகதை, ஹரிநாம சங்கீர்த்தனத்தில் இடம் பெற்ற அபங், பஜன் போன்ற இசை முறைகள் தற்கால இசை கச்சேரிகளிலும் இடம் பெற்று வருகின்றன. இவை, இந்துஸ்தானி நாம சங்கீர்த்தன சம்ப்ரதாயத்திற்கு ஏற்றவாறு பொருத்தமான ஏற்றங்களாகிய மாற்றங்கள் செய்து நிர்ணயத்துடன் உத்தராரணம் செய்யப்பட்டால், கர்நாடக சங்கீத உருப்படி வகைகளுக்கு மேலும் நல்ல Happy and Healthy additions ஆக அமையும் எனக் கருதுகிறேன். அவ்வாறு சேவை புரியும் இளைய தலைமுறையினர்க்கு என் பாராட்டுக்கள்.

உலக அளவில் இந்திய சங்கீதத்தின் உயர்வினை போற்றி பாதுகாத்து ப்ரசாரம் செய்து சேவை செய்து வரும் இந்த வித்வத் மகா சபையினின்று கௌரவம் பெரும் இந்நாளில், எனக்கு சந்தர்ப்பங்கள் அளித்து என் திறமையை உலகிற்கு காட்டிய சபைகள், எனக்கு ஊக்கமும், உற்சாகமும் அளித்து வாசித்து என் கச்சேரியை பரிமாளிக்க வைத்த சென்ற தலைமுறையைச் சேர்ந்த பக்க வாத்யக் கலைஞர்கள், எனது சக கலைஞர்கள், இளம் தலைமுறைக் கலைஞர்கள், கச்சேரிகளைக் கேட்டு, மகிழ்ந்து, ஆசி வழங்கி, அறிவுரைகள் நல்கி, நல்வழிப்படுத்திய Senior வித்வான்கள், இசை நிகழ்ச்சிகளுக்கு வந்து கலை விமர்சனம் செய்த ரூானஸ்தர்கள், எல்லாவற்றிற்கும் மேலாக என் அருமை ரசிக்கிகாமணிகள் எல்லோருக்கும் மீண்டும் ஒருமுறை என் நம்ஸ்காரத்தையும் நன்றியையும் தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறேன்.

நாளையிலிருந்து நிகழவிருக்கும் மாநாட்டு நிகழ்ச்சி வைபவங்களில் சங்கீத ஆராய்ச்சி நிரூபண நிகழ்ச்சிகளில், சர்ச்சைகளில், எனக்கு உறுதுணையாக, பக்க பலமாக இருந்து உதவி செய்து மாநாட்டினை வெற்றிகரமாக நடத்தித் தருவதற்கு Expert Committee அனுபவம் மிக்க வித்வான்கள், இசை ஆராய்ச்சியாளர்கள், சக கலைஞர்கள், அறிவாளிகள், ஆன்மோர்கள் ஆகிய எல்லோருடைய ஒத்துழைப்பினையும் மற்றும் ஆதரவினையும் கோருகிறேன்.

நம்ஸ்காரம்! நன்றி!

Courtesy: Music Academy, Chennai



## SRI MUTHUSWAMY DIKSHITAR AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO CARNATIC MUSIC\*

by Prof. S.R. Janakiraman (contd. from previous issue of 'Shanmukha' Oct. - Dec. 2006)

### Theme of Sahitya :

What sort of person was Dikshitar? His kritis will tell us if we read between the lines. He had at his command the entire body of ancient learning. Music and devotion were in his blood. Even from his infancy he developed a sense of vocation and straightaway prepared for his life's work like that great epic poet Milton. But unlike the English poet nothing could sour his sweetness of disposition. Even Sanaishara, for whom a layman rarely has a good word, gets a tribute from Dikshitar which reflects his philosophic temper and unbounded faith in the providence. If Dikshitar had experienced any emotional crisis or spiritual storm or stress, it has left no trace in his kritis. There it is all serenity and poise. So much so there are also some who complain that he is a little cold and that had he been only a little human, he might have moved us profoundly. But this criticism is due to a basic misconception of his mind, heart and art. His music appeals for the most part to the contemplative mind and its prime virtue lies in his strengthening that tendency.

The subject matter of his compositions looks at first sight narrow and the treatment pedestrian. In fact every song of his, is a hymn or praise, an invocation for some deity or other. It has even been said by some scholar all his compositions are the 'Mam pahi type'. To put it in a dignified garb, it may be said that Dikshitar's music consists of impersonal art forms.

His life is one long pilgrimage and at every shrine he made his offering of song incorporating in loving detail the customs and tradition of the temple, focussing his attention on the special attributes that find expression in the local deity. He was no sectarian. His catholicity of outlook is however not a cloak for indifference but is the outcome of spiritual realisation.

The language as befits his theme is spare and austere. It reflects his deep familiarity with Mantra and Yoga

\*Dr. V. Raghavan Srashtyabdhapurli Endowment Lecture

Sastras. His Kamalamba Navavarana kritis and those on the main planets are evidence in point. The charana of the Gowri Kriti "Gowri girirajakumari" reproduces word by word a famous stanza from the Soundaryalahari of Adisankara. His kshetra kritis constitute sthala Mahatmyam. While utilizing in full all the musical resources and metrical devices of the language, he does not attempt at producing complex rhythms in poetry. Where even musical effect demands it he does it to sacrifice literary elegance. Just as Tyagaraja has produced some Samkshepa Ramayana Kirtanas in "Sri Rama Jaya Rama" in Yadukulakambhoji, "Vinayamunanu" in Saurashtra, Dikshitar has produced "Balagopala" in Bhairavi and "Chetasri Balakrishnam" in Dvijavanti etc.

### A COMPARISON OF THE TREATMENT OF SOME PARTICULAR RAGAS BY DIKSHITAR AND TYAGARAJA:

A close examination of the kritis of these two great composers in one and the same raga side by side will bear ample testimony to the fact that they vie with each other in point of purity and richness. of raga bhava and they form a class by themselves.

#### ILLUSTRATION:

"Sri Subrahmanyaya"	- Kambhoji	- Dikshitar
"Mari Mari Ninne"	- Kambhoji	- Tyagaraja
"Abhayamba"	- Kalyani	- Dikshitar
"Etavunara"	- Kalyani	- Tyagaraja
"Kaaruvelpulu"	- Kalyani	- Tyagaraja

Tyagaraja's mental experience was diverse in character and made him pour forth ragas depicting different rasas and phases of rasas. Tyagaraja speaks of "Navarasayuta Kriti". He is the master of 'Raga and Rasa'.

#### ILLUSTRATION:

"Naradaganalola"	- Athana (evoking bhakti)
"Yepapamu Chesitira"	- Athana (A raga chiefly known for portraying 'Vira' and raudra rasas)

Bank of India

### The Global Player

100 years of serving the nation. 2605 branches in India and 23 across the globe. Powered by the latest technology and a dedicated workforce, offering a touch of personal care and the choicest banking products!

- Convenience of anytime, anywhere banking through the Internet, Multi-city Cheques, ATMs, Kiosks, Credit Cards and Debit Cards
- Online facilities like Global Remittances, Share Trading, Utility Bills Payment, Tax Payment etc.
- A bouquet of retail products for all your needs

"100 years of making dreams come true."

www.bankofindia.com

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया  
Bank of India

**SERENITY AND POISE IN DIKSHITAR'S KRITIS:**

Dikshitar's kritis evoke mostly a feeling of serenity and poise. Santa rasa pervades the atmosphere. His raga forms are the finest specimens of pure or absolute music. Gana rasa is the sole feeling experienced while listening to Dikshitar's raga structures. His raga forms are large scale products, massive in structure and closely knit in texture. In Tyagaraja, we have abridged editions as well as enlarged ones of ragas.

**ILLUSTRATION:**

'Aragimpave' & 'Kaddanavariki' - Todi - Tyagaraja.  
Dikshitar's structure in one and the same raga is uniformly of the same magnitude though in different form.

'Akshayalinga' & 'Dakshinamurte' - Sankarabharanam - Dikshitar

**NEW RAGA CREATIONS:**

The manner of handling of certain ragas by Dikshitar and Tyagaraja may particularly be noted in this context. A good number of ragas is accredited to Tyagaraja as having been created for the first time through his kritis. Dikshitar has given us the benefit of the archaic forms of some ragas.

**ILLUSTRATION:**

'Kamalamba Samrakshatu' - Anandabhairavi  
'Sankha Chakra' - Purna Chandrika

Dikshitar has given mould to Purnachandrika which is rather archaic. It seems an amalgamation of Purna chandrika and Janaranjani, the latter being an off-shoot of the former. Purna Chandrika is older while Janaranjani came later. Tyagaraja evolved Janaranjani, out of the archaic Purnachandrika and individualised and immortalised both Purnachandrika and Janaranjani in his kritis. The old fashioned Purnachandrika as preserved by Dikshitar in his "Sankha Chakra" brings in "Dirgha ga" and "Dirgha dha" now transmitted into Janaranjani. Dikshitar has not composed in Janaranjani.

**ILLUSTRATION:**

"Sankha Chakra" - Dikshitar  
"Palukavemi" - Tyagaraja - Purna Chandrika  
It may incidentally be mentioned that the treatment of a few other ragas mentioned by Dikshitar is altogether different. It is not known whether Dikshitar is the real

author or it is Subbarama Dikshitar's making. But Subbarama Dikshitar is not subject to much accusation in this regard. Isamanohari and Sarasvatimanohari have had kakali nishada and the same could be evidenced textually.

**DIFFERENT ATMOSPHERE:**

Creation of an altogether different atmosphere is quite perceptible in one and the same raga, cast by different composers.

**ILLUSTRATIONS**

'Kanjadalaya' - Dikshitar  
'Nimuddumomu' - Tyagaraja, Kamala manohari  
'Nirajakshi' - Dikshitar  
'Samajavara' - Tyagaraja - Hindolam  
'Ananda Natana' - Dikshitar  
'Marachevadana' - Tyagaraja - Kedaram

**MADHYAMAKALA SAHITYAS IN DIKSHITAR'S KRITIS:**

The rendering of raga should have its own perceptible laya though not marked into regular intervals of time. There is, after all, a sense of rhythm in every aspect of nature. The raga has been featured by these two composers in quick moving pace and slow pace, with individualistic expressions each unsurpassed for its beauty and splendour. It seems that their respective presentation of raga feature is perfectly well balanced along with the other; that of Dikshitar in vilamba' or slow tempo, while Tyagaraja's kritis in even slow tempo have an underlying rhythm of madhyamakala. Dikshitar conceived the raga in slow pace. The Indian musical genius conceived melody as independent of any thought of harmony, as against the westerner who conceives melody harmonically, that is to say, melodic ideas pivoted on relationships of harmony. But at the same time, Dikshitar never lost sight of the intrinsic beauties, while interpolating realatively fast moving phrases in some ragas which were eminently suitable for such a treatment though their basic mode was cast in slow tempo.

**ILLUSTRATION:**

"Anandanatana" - Kedaram  
"Kanjadalayataskhi" - Kamalamanohari

It is with a definite purpose that Dikshitar chose to set apart the musical setting in any section or sections of

the song in relatively quicker tempo, to do adequate justice to the raga concerned. But here too, one could observe that Dikshitar chose to introduce madhyamakala movement, not as a matter of routine. In his structure, some kritis are conspicuous for the omission of madhyamakala movement, though there may be an apparent impression of its inclusion created by the closely knit sahityas with more words, as against the paucity of words in the other sections of the song.

**ILLUSTRATION:**

"Abhayamba" - Kalyani  
"Minakshimemudam" - Gamakakriya

Contrasted with this category of kritis, there are kritis of Dikshitar which no doubt present madhyamakala sahityas with liting beauty.

"Bhajare" - Kalyani  
"Sri Subrahmanyaya" - Kambhoji

Dikshitar created variation as opportunity for himself to cover a large orbit of the raga structure in the kritis. The dhatu of the music of the kritis never repeats itself in any section of the song. There are of course the kritis of Dikshitar only with the pallavi and anupallavi; the latter is commonly known as samashti charana but not found as such in the "Sangita Sampradaya Pradarisni". In a good number of compositions of Tyagaraja set particularly in perceptible madhyamakala, the latter half of the charana is on the lines of the anupallavi. Further, there are also kritis of Tyagaraja having plural charanas all sung to the same 'Dhatu'. Splendid instances of these are 'Darini Telusu' and 'Dorakuna Ituvanti'. In a few kritis of Tyagaraja the plural charanas are sung in different Dhatus as in Sri Raghuvaramprameya (Kambhoji) Brochevarevare (Sri Ranjani) and Endukunirdaya (Harikambhoji).

**SANGATIS:**

Sangatis or the variations on the fundamental musical theme constitute an integral part of the kritis of Tyagaraja, which have contributed in no small measure to the magnificent and colourful portrayal of raga forms in his kritis. Tyagaraja particularly is one composer who adopted sangatis with a purpose. A set of sangatis well-sequenced has been incorporated in some kritis primarily for the enlargement of raga structure.

**ILLUSTRATION:**

"Darini" - Suddha Saveri  
"Kaluvamare gada" - Todi

Contrasted with this, we have other kritis of Tyagaraja where the sangatis have been included solely for the purposes of elucidating the intrinsic bhavas, latent shades and ideas enshrined in the meaning of the sahitya.

**ILLUSTRATION:**

"Mari Mari Ninne" - Kambhoji  
"Dorakuna" - Bilahari

The lack of this element has been compensated by Dikshitar in his kritis by the long drawn movement of theme, set to a majestic elephantine gait, breathing an atmosphere of ample leisure and beatitude.

**RHYTHMIC SETTINGS - NO CHAPU TALAS:**

The rhythmic setting and its flow evident in his kritis have again been the outcome of the handling of the raga expression with the individual stamp of distinction. Jerks and jolts were out of place for Dikshitar. A clear and uninterrupted rhythmic movement is a feature of Dikshitar's kritis. Variety of pace is the speciality discernible in Tyagaraja's structure. Besides, Adi, Rupaka, Jampa, Triputa talas, Tyagaraja also employed Khanda and Misra chapu talas. Syncopated rhythm of the chapu could never suit slow movement. It is a matter of common apprehension that if the Misra chapu tala is reckoned in vilamba laya, it becomes Tisra Triputa with its Trisra laghu and two dhruvas. Likewise, if the tempo of the Triputa is speeded up it results in Misra chapu with only three beats or sometimes with the two beats and one visarjitam. We find Dikshitar's kritis only in Trisra eka, khanda eka and Misra eka talas. Nowhere is the word chapu used for Dikshitar's as rendered in notation in the Sangita Sampradaya Pradarisini by Subbarama Dikshitar.

**GRACE:**

Grace and embellishment are the soul of Carnatic music. The continuous curve of Indian music distinguishes it from the other systems of music. Gamaka does not comprise only shakes. The term should be understood comprehensively to mean and include not only shakes and graces but also the

manipulation of any note in such a manner as to produce the richest musical effect. Thus even a note rendered plain may shine of its own character. This "Susvara Gayana" has been given all emphasis in the picturing of ragas by Dikshitar.

## ILLUSTRATION

"Sri Subrahmanyoham" - Todi

A judicious and graduated grace in rendering the notes in a raga has always its own charm.

## ASAMPURNA MELA PADDHATI:

In the employment of scales in general, Dikshitar was not very particular about the requirement of the full complement of the notes in the regular order of ascent and descent. This he scrupulously observed in the case of the so-called vivadi scales. His compositions in such ragas are less elaborate. Dikshitar is reported to have adopted the asampurna mela paddhati. We have his kriti in Bhanumati and not in Vanaspathi, and again Bhoga chaya nata and not in Vagadheeswari.

## ILLUSTRATION:

'Brahadamba' — Bhanumati - Dikshitar  
"Paramatmudu" - Vagadeeswari- Tyagaraja.

The above phenomenon incidentally accounts for the non-availability of kritis of Dikshitar in such popular ragas of Tyagaraja like Kharaharapriya, Harikambhoji. However Tyagaraja had his own innovations in depicting vivadi melas and ragas.

## PROSODY IN DIKSHITAR'S KRITIS:-

What metre is to poetry, tala is to musical compositions. Tala regulates the occurrence of yati and prasa in musical compositions. No other composition of any other composer will furnish a satisfying evidence for the observance of prosodical structure in musical composition than those of Dikshitar. In all the kritis of Muthuswamy Dikshitar, which bear the authentic stamps of musical writing, we find the scrupulous observance of the prosodical rules. For purpose of symmetry of grace Dikshitar has introduced yati or prasa yati, even in the half avartas and quarter avartas. The composition must be studied in its entirety.

## NOTTU SWARA SAHITYAS OF DIKSHITAR

It is well-known that Dikshitar's brother Balaswamy Dikshitar learnt violin under a European teacher. It was then, that the instrument was adopted to serve the needs of Carnatic music. No doubt this provides an ample opportunity for our hero to get influenced with the Western major diatonic scale revolving round which he composed Nottu Swara Sahitya as they called. These provide simple sahitya and some simple tunes though revolving round only Sankarabharanam and they help our music students in their own way to get at the kernel position of the notes.

## INTRODUCTION OF RAGA MUDRA

This may look at the outset a little academic. It involves a thorough mastery of the language. He introduced the *suchita and suddha raga mudra*, without at the same time interfering with the textual structure of the song. But it may be noted that here also Dikshitar did not make it a routine business. Perhaps in a few earlier kritis in the raga, he took a fancy to introduce raga mudra but gave it up subsequently thinking it as superfluous. His very famous kriti Sri Subrahmanyaya does not have the raga mudra and so also Sri Raia Gopala in Saveri.

The introduction of the raga mudra has got its own virtues in as much as it sets at rest the conflicting views not only with regard to the names of the ragas but the very existence of the ragas themselves like the introduction of the raga names as Sama and Nilambari. In the relevant kritis he gives clues to the correct reading of the names of ragas concerned. Kritis of Dikshitar are available individually in Aarabhi, Pantuvarali and Ramakriya. His "Mamava minakshi" is depicted in Varali of the 39th mela Pasupateeswara in Pantuvarali of 45th mela and Uchchishta Ganapati in Ramakriya in 51st mela. Similarly kritis in Bhupala and Revagupti without giving any room for us to mistake Revagupti for Bhupala and vice versa.

Sri Parvati - in Bauli  
Sadavinutasadare - Revagupti  
Sadachaleswaram - Bhupalam

Courtesy: The Journal of the Music Academy, Vol. VII-1986

## NIRAVAL SINGING

by Smt. Suguna Puroshothaman

Niraval is a speciality in Carnatic Music which brings out

1. Creative abilities of the artist.
2. Musical proficiency of the artist.
3. Various aspects of the Sahitya Bhava.

Niraval plays an important role in Manodharma aspect of Carnatic Music. Only artists of high music calibre can sing good quality Niraval. Singing Niraval elevates the quality of a concert.

Carnatic Music is classified under two types.

1. Kalpitha Sangitha and
2. Kalpana or Manodharma Sangitha.

## Kalpitha Sangitha

These musical forms are already composed by several vaggeyakaras and propagated by Vidwans. Examples : Geethams, Swarajathis, Varnams, Keerthanams, Krithis, Ragamalika, Padam, Javali and Thillana. These are authentic forms of Music. These musical forms are self-explanatory of the Ragas in which they are composed. This form of music is commonly used for creating Raga awareness.

For example, in the Raga Thodi, there are Varnams in Adi, Rupaka, Ata Thal, both concise and elaborate Krithis with Sangathi of great composers. Some popular pieces in Thodi Raga are

*Tyagaraja* : Kaddanu Variki,  
Koluvamaragada,  
Aaragimpave,  
Chesinadella,  
Enduku Dayaradura  
*Muthuswami Dikshitar* : Sreekrishnam,  
Kamalambike

*Shyama Sastri* : Rave (Swara jathi)  
Ninnenamminanu  
*Patnam Subramania Iyer* : Sree Venkatesa  
*Ramaswami Sivan* : Ananda Natesa  
*Papanasam Sivan* : Karthikeya Kangeya

The compositions exist in Ghana Ragas as well as other less known Ragas like Navarasa, Kannada, Manjari, Manji, Palamanjari. These are the existing specimens, illustrating the Ragas in different aspects and conveying the thoughts of the composers.

## Kalpana (Manodharma) Sangitha

These are musical forms which are not already composed. The aspects of music such as Raga, Alapana, Niraval, Kalpana Swaras, Pallavi, Slokam, Ragamalika that we hear in concerts belong to this type. Manodharma is the peak level of our music comprising of spontaneous innovations which reveal Vidwan's creative talents. These innovations include presenting an established Raga in the artist's own style, retaining its intricacies in different phases without marring the purity and remaining within the boundaries set for the Raga. These may vary from time to time, concert to concert even for the same artist.

## Raga Alapana and Kalpana Swarams

We do Raga Alapana using "Thatharina" and Akara, Ikara's. There are no limitations of Tala for Raga Alapana. Kalpana Swaras are sung independently but within the Tala discipline. The Swaras already composed are called Chittaswaras. Kalpanaswaras show vidwan's imagination in presenting different combinations in Swaram singing.

## Niraval

Niraval is sung with suitable words and Tala discipline. Niraval is distribution, distributing in an appropriate way. In Niraval singing, we take a suitable part of a Krithi, expressing different imaginative sangathis to suit the meaning and the Bhava of the words. As dancers portray the various meanings, Bhava of a particular sentence / phrase using Abhinayas and movements, musicians present



the Bhava of a sentence / phrase with their own Kalpana Sangathis to glorify their meaning more and more. We should be careful in selecting the apt place for Niraval singing. Both the lyric and music should suit Niraval singing. As we repeat the same line several times during Niraval, the words chosen for Niraval should suit to serve the purpose. Even though, each and every one of the lines or the compositions of the great composers portray with full aptness, Sangeetham and Sahithyam, we have

Given below is a list of highly suited places for Niraval in some popular krithis

Krithis	Best phrase for Niraval
1. Kaddanavariki Kaddu	Paddhu Thappaka Bhajiyinche Bhaktha Palanamu Seyu
2. Endudaginado	Alanadu Kanakakasipu Nindarau (or) Sthambamu lopala nundaga leda
3. Endukudayaradura	Deenasaranya Neevegaani dariledayya
4. Neepadamule	Sree Panchanadeeswaruni Rani
5. Nammivachina	Vedapurangama Sashtadulu Gumigoodi (or) Nadarupa Sri Soundarya Nayakipathe
6. Needucharana	Vo Jagatjanani Manonmani Omkararupini Kalyani
7. Evarimata	Parama Bhakthaparadheenudu
8. Yadava Neebha	Akalanka Mahimana Aadinarayana

#### Factors to be considered in selecting appropriate place for Niraval

1. The phrase should have a complete meaning, without affecting the musical part.
2. The words should be pleasing to hear again and again.
3. The phrase may consist of several names of Gods. For example, 'Sundaresa Suguna' Brunda Dasaratha Nandana Aravinda Nayana Pavana' in the charanam of Enati Nomu Palamu, 'Sankha Chakra Gadaa Padma Vanamalam' in Sreekrishnam (Thodi).
4. The phrase should be a nuclear point which brings out the composer's expressions.
5. Phrases which bring out negative aspects should be avoided. For example, the phrase

to look for the nuclear point of the song, most suited for Niraval singing.

While Singing 'Enthaninne Varninthunu Sabari Bhagyamu' (Mukari), in the charanam, the phrase 'Kanulara Sevichi Kammani Palamulanosagi, emotionally describes the greatness of Sabari, how she had darshan of Sree Rama, while offering sweetest fruits devotedly chosen. Hence it appears to be the most appropriate place for Niraval.

'Mattikuntakaina Heenadhidhi' in Ettunamminavo (Saveri) or 'Pattigoddureethi Bhakshinchi Thirigithi' in Etulabrothuvo Theliya' in Chakravakam to be avoided.

6. Phrases not suited for the occasion should be avoided. For example, the phrase 'Sankalpamettitho' to be avoided while singing for celebrations.
7. Phrases which portray the composer's grievances are to be avoided. For example, in Nadupaibalikerunaru, Thyagaraja sings that others complain of him that he had divided the family. We should not highlight such grievances in the Niraval. In the same song, the charana starts with 'Aajanubahu Yuga Sri Janakipathi' which is the apt place for Niraval.

8. Niraval for Madhyamakala Sahithyas are to be avoided unless there are suitable places in the particular krithi. This is because, as Madhyamakala Sahithyas are studded with many words, it would be difficult to sing Niraval comfortably.

9. Niravals are usually to be sung in Anupallavi or Charanam. If there is no place which suits in Anupallavi or charanam, I feel we can sing Niraval in Pallavi also, may be against tradition. For example, 'Rama Baana Thrana Sowryama Emani Pohadudhura' is more apt for Niraval in the Krithi 'Rama Baana' though it comes in Pallavi.

#### Musical aspects of Niraval

We sing Niraval in slow, medium or fast Kalapramanas, in tune with the tempo of the song. We try to present the Bhava of the line taken for Niraval in various ways, singing different, appropriate musical Sangathis. Niraval may be appreciated more than Kalpanaswaras, as it consists of meaningful words to sing unlike Kalpana Swaras which are made up of Swaras alone. We can sing different attractive varieties, combinations as in Kalpana Swaras, especially in speed tempo. For Example, 'Sarvesudou Srivenkatesa' in 'Sankalpamettitho' (Karaharapriya). We can make Niraval interesting by combining or

splitting the words in suitable ways as illustrated below :

#### Anudinamunu (Begada) :

Ruchinirupamu  
Kanakana Ruchinirupamu  
Rama Kanakana Ruchinupamu  
Kakodara Sayana Rama  
Kanakana Ruchinirupamu

#### Nammivachina (Kalyani)

Gumigoodi,  
Sashtadulu Gumigoodi  
Agama Sashtadulu Gumigoodi,  
Puranagama Sashtadulu Gumigoodi,  
Veda Puranagama Sashtadulu  
Gumigoodi

Music should blend with the meaning, for the best presentation. We sing different Sangathis in Niraval and get back to the starting point as prescribed by the composer. The changing of the places of words should not be done. At times, to give a very nice musical effect, we may sacrifice the strict adherence of the places or Sahithya (in Krithis) in the Tala, very rarely.

#### Niraval in Pallavi Singing

The Sahithya should not be changed as it will lead to confusion. The Sahithya of Pallavi is set in rhythmic patterns not like in Krithi. We should carefully sing Niraval without changing the rhythmic patterns of the words already set.

Example	Niraval in Pallavi
Raga	Bhairavi
Sahithyam	Kadaikan Vaitthennai Alamma Karunakari Sankari Gowri
Talam	Thisra Jathi Jampa Misra Gathi 42 (6 x 7) Aksharas
Commencement	Two Aksharas after samam
Poorva Bhagam	19 (6 + 7 + 6) Kadaikan Vaitthennai Aalam
Authi Karvai	8 Ma
Uthara Bhagam	15 (7 + 5 + 3) Karunakari Sankari Gowri
Author	Lalgudi Sri Jayaraman

Lecture / Demonstration at 29th Music Conference of Gayana Samaja, Bangalore.

It's FREE. It's international. And it's instant!  
It's the smartest ATM-cum-Debit Card around.



Get a free International Debit Card  
instantly with every Savings/Current Account.



■ Instant issuance of Debit Card with PIN ■ Free Personal Accident Insurance cover of Rs.2,00,000 ■ Multiple Account Access ■ Access to all Visa enabled POS terminals (Merchant Establishments) across the world ■ Access to more than 1 million ATMs across the world

Toll Free No: 1800 226900 [www.unionbankofindia.com](http://www.unionbankofindia.com)

यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया  
अच्छे लोग, अच्छा बैंक



Union Bank of India  
Good people to bank with

Conditions apply

## "MUKTHAMMA is no more, long live the Dhanammal Bani"

by Ms. Kripa Subramaniam



Muktha Amma, who was the other half of Brinda, in the field of Carnatic music, became a doyen in her own right. Brinda & Muktha came in the lineage of Veena Dhanammal and they were grand-daughters of the legendary Veena Dhanammal. Muktha was born in the year 1914 to Smt. Kamakshi and Sri Soundara Raja Iyengar. Dhanammal's house, always filled with music, was a focal point for artistes to gather and interact with each other. Musicians of repute such as Smt. Jayammal, her daughter Smt. T. Balasaraswathi, Sri T. Viswanathan are some of the great names who hailed from the Dhanammal family.

It is noteworthy that all the three offsprings of Kamakshi took to music. Brinda and Muktha took to vocal music whereas Abhirama Sundari took to learning the violin. Later, when Brinda and Muktha started giving concerts, it was Abhirama Sundari who accompanied them fairly regularly on the violin. They took their initial music lessons from their mother Kamakshi. Later, they underwent tutelage from Kanchipuram Naina Pillai. Naina Pillai was initially reluctant to take Muktha under his wings, but their mother's dogged effort bore fruit ultimately and that is how both Brinda and Muktha took lessons from Naina Pillai. Later, the very same Pillai was literally taken aback by Muktha's virtuosity and talent, when she proved her mettle. Brinda was barely ten years old and Muktha was eight when their maiden concert got off to a flying start. Their next teacher was Lakshmiratnam, the second daughter of Dhanammal and sister of

Kamakshi. Thus it is that Brinda and Muktha were drawn to the inimitable 'bani' of Veena Dhanammal.

Their aunt Lakshmiratnam was a highly demanding teacher, who taught them the compositions of Dikshitar, Shyama Sastri padams of Kshetragnya, Ghanam Krishna Iyer, etc. Dhanammal herself taught padams and javalis to Brinda and Muktha. They had lessons from the greats like Tanjore Ponniah Pillai and Tiger Varadachary.

Brinda and Muktha then stormed the concert arena with a 'bani' that was totally different from the singers of that period. Their style was based on the style of Veena Dhanammal, a style that was sedate, serene music that flowed like a quiet stream, devoid of any gimmicks whatsoever. Their conviction in their musical abilities, their justified pride in the parampara they belonged to, made them stick to traditional and purist values. They were past masters in padam and javali singing. Padams demand great breath control and inner relaxation in order to render it effectively. They rendered many rare Thyagaraja kritis, to the delight of the listeners.

The lovely combination of Brinda and Muktha duo singing regaled the audience for nearly four decades. In the late 60's Muktha Amma gave way to Smt. Vegavahini who is the daughter of Smt. Brinda. This was an irreparable loss to the music world and left a deep void. Muktha's voice gave that extra edge and glow which made it a rare treat to listen to them. The art of padam singing demands a deep musical wisdom, an insight or one may call it as innate 'Jnanam' to understand the inbuilt beauty of the Raga and Tala that are woven into it.

In 1969 Muktha shifted her base to Mumbai, where she taught at Shanmukananda Sabha's music school. During her stay at Mumbai for nearly eighteen months, the famous Guru Bombay, S. Ramachandran who was a teacher at the Shanmukananda Music School had the benefit of learning from her. Muktha later went to Madurai to stay with her daughter, finally settling down at Chennai.

In the year 1972, Muktha received the 'Central Sangeetha Natak Academy Award'. She was conferred the 'Sangeetha Kala Acharya' at the Madras Music Academy Festival in the year 1995. In March 2002 she participated in the Cleveland Thyagaraja Aradhana Festival. In January 2003, she gave a concert at Musiri's house in Chennai with S. Sowmya giving vocal support. This was almost her last concert and blessed indeed are they who had the good fortune of listening to her. It was a concert of one's life time to remember and cherish. Her music flowed like majestic Ganga. It was manna from heaven, since, it came after the maddening concerts that were held in different parts of Chennai, during the famous December festival. Muktha was in her eighties, but age had not withered her musical charm. She moved from mellowness to sublime music. The kutcheri she gave on that day was replete with short spells of ragas, devoid of swarams, neravals and kanakkus. Pregnant with Raga Bhavam, her music was full of nuances and subtle gamakas that left one awestruck.

Rendering a krithi or padam in Vilamba kalam is the most demanding feature of our Carnatic system, since every swaram should abide in its stipulated sthanam. Muktha's vilamba kalam rendition, even at that age, spoke volumes for her remarkable mastery and control.

Muktha never compromised on her integrity to music for name, fame, title or money. She was brought up in a musical atmosphere and

she knew only music. Music was her ever lasting passion and she lived amidst music, breathed music, thought music, taught music to her sishtyas and thus music was her 'Taraka Mantra' till her end. She had most unassuming nature and she carried her music with ease and aplomb. She was a gentle person and loved her sister Brinda deeply. She was smitten with grief when her cousin T. Viswanathan predeceased her.

She had a host of Sishtyas to her credit. Sangeetha Kalanidhi Smt. R. Vedavalli was one of her earlier disciples. Smt. Vedavalli got the Sangeetha Nataka Academy Scholarship and she learnt padams and javalis from Mukhta Amma. Bombay S. Ramachandran, Rama Ravi, Dr. Ritha Rajan, Nirmala Sunderrajan and S. Sowmya are some of her notable disciples.

Brinda and Muktha did not record any tapes in their earlier career, except what we have in the AIR archives. Much later, Muktha sang padams and javalis to be taped for commercial use.

Mukhta Amma left her mortal coils on March 11th 2007. She was bed-ridden for sometime and according to her close circuit of well-wishers, she forgot her own people at times, because of old age, but never one line or one sangati got missed in the songs that she used to sing. Such was her passion for music, and music went so deep, that it was difficult to separate Music and Mukhta Amma. Her unwavering commitment, dedication and discipline to the art could be lessons for students of Carnatic music to follow.

Muktha was proud of her very famous lineage i.e. parampara and never once sacrificed tradition and kept aloft their 'unassailable Bani'. With the departure of Mukhta Amma, one of the torch - bearers of the Veena Dhanammal's tradition was lost to the music world. 7

*With Best Compliments*

*From :*



# JAYRAJ AGENCIES

**JAYARAM MANI**

*Partner*

C/o. 6, Chadha Building,  
3, Sion Road,  
Mumbai - 400 019.

Res.: 2402 1871 / 2401 1664

## INTERVIEW

## THE LEGACY LIVES ON

by Radha Namboodiri



**S**eetha Rajan is perhaps the only musician to have received the coveted awards of Acharya Choodamani (Krishna Gana Sabha) and Sangita Kala Acharya (Music Academy), both

with a vision of creating a band of committed musicians as teachers and scholars, apart from being performing artistes.

*Going down memory lane, she thus reminisces to the author, one of her batchmates, under the tutelage of Semmangudi Mama, about her musical journey, beginning from her early days in the pursuit of music and culminating in her latest project, Bodhana—*

**How and when did you develop an interest in music?**

In my early childhood, I heard gramophone records of the legends M.S. Subbulakshmi and N.C. Vasanthakokilam at my grandparents' home in Madras. Their voices appealed to me. I loved singing their songs and that was my initiation into music.

**Tell us about your musical lineage.**

My mother used to sing and play on the harmonium. She had learnt Harmonium from the Kalakkad family. In those days most of the music teachers used to teach on harmonium. My father was a great connoisseur of classical Carnatic music and used to take me to all concerts at a very young age which gave me an opportunity of listening to stalwarts that later served as a motivation to take to music. My favourite musicians were M.D. Ramanathan, Madurai Mani Iyer and Ramnad Krishnan. I still have immense liking for MDR's music which is pristine pure and evergreen. I believe the impact of listening to his music is imprinted on my singing. In spite of his job that involved transfers, my father saw to it that I had an uninterrupted training for 10 years under Kittamani Iyer, a very dedicated teacher of the

Umayalpuram Parampara and a student of the veteran Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer. The initial lessons were from his disciples N. Srinivasan and H.Y. Narayanan from whom I learnt to write notation at a very young age. That gave me a strong foundation in music.

**What were the circumstances under which you came under the tutelage of Semmangudi mama. How did he influence you as a guru?**

While in Hyderabad, the lady musicians used to meet for music sessions and one of them Smt. Jaya Sarangapani, a disciple of D.K. Pattammal, exhorted me to apply for Govt. of India's cultural scholarship and go to Madras for advanced training under D.K. Pattammal for furthering my musical pursuits. It was then that Shri M.N. Subramanyam, a close acquaintance of Semmangudi mama introduced me to mama who consented to take me as a student under his wings under the scholarship scheme. I had gone one month ahead of the scholarship interview to Madras and participated in almost all the music season competitions in various Sabhas by learning about 100 compositions from notations in 20 days and won 13 prizes with a special prize of transistor for winning maximum number of prizes in the same year. This had somehow reached Mama's ears and he was more than willing to accept me into his fold. It was my proud privilege to receive all the prizes from Smt. M.S. Subbulakshmi who was the Sangita Kalanidhi awardee during that year (1968) and she was also the judge for all the competitions of the Music Academy. Getting a scholarship under Semmanagudi mama proved to be a turning point in my music education. More than learning kritis, I learnt to understand his thought process. He was a very intelligent teacher who could gauge the ability of students and shape them accordingly. He did not want me to sound like his replica and

encouraged me to evolve my own style of singing. He explained how a kriti was set to music, highlighted its aesthetic structure and thus enabled us to pick up any kriti from its notation and adapt it to his bani. He recognised my talent for writing notation. Notating the Navavarana kritis under his guidance and repeating the sangatis for his approval was indeed a rewarding experience. I developed my penchant for niraval and kalpana swara singing from Mama, especially the vast variety of short and brisk swaras in one avatana and the aesthetic presentation of a kriti. I also had the opportunity to listen to D.K. Jayaraman who used to teach my neighbour Shanthi at Chennai which paved the way for many interesting exchanges of notes on music and kritis. Then again Semmangudi mama used to send us to Musiri Subramanya Iyer's class on Oliver Road to learn, when he was away for concerts, and my penchant for Vilambakalam and bhava laden style made me an ardent pupil of Musiri mama which made my guru to jokingly remark that "You are an Oliver Road case now". My batchmates like Suguna Purushothaman also inspired me to attain greater heights in singing kalpana swaras effortlessly for rare and vakra ragas like Malavi, Sindhunamakriya, Gundakriya, Salakabhairavi, Janaranjani and kokilavarali.

**Although you started your career in music in your early twenties, how is it that you came to be known only much later?**

After my marriage, I was away from Madras for 15 years with my husband who was in the army and my trips to Madras in between his postings at remote places like Kashmir, Ladakh and Dehradun, were too short to establish my career. But that life had its own plus points. Although I could listen to Carnatic Music only on the National Programme of music on All India Radio, it gave me tremendous exposure



to different kinds of music which helped in widening my horizon. I had heard Pahadi flutes and Mohanam on folk instruments. But I used to practice regularly and recorded for All India Radio whenever I was in Madras or Hyderabad.

**Are you satisfied with your musical career as a concert artiste? Any regrets for not making it big on the concert circuit?**

I think I am temperamentally more an artiste than a performer. Also, I was always searching for new things to do. In any case, I would have got bored to fall into the rut of performing concerts every other day according to public taste with no time for thinking or researching on music. In the 80's, I did my masters in Music from Bangalore University where R.K. Ramanathan, Prof. of musicology and Vidwan Shri. R.K. Srikanthan's brother, opened up new vistas for me of how to apply knowledge and study of theory / musicology to strengthen the base for practical singing which made my music more mature. I also taught music for a year in Bangalore University. Then from 1981 - 84 when I was in Madras, I was very much in contact with Semmangudi mama off and on and he sent me to Mukthamma to learn padams, javalis and rare kritis and this helped me to temper my understanding of music. Mama exposed me to a lot many things and left it to my judgement to follow with strict directions as to what to absorb and what to avoid.

**When did you take up teaching seriously? Is teaching more gratifying than performing?**

In the 90s my husband took voluntary retirement from the army, a great sacrifice on his part to channelise my prospects in the music field. We had planned to settle in Bangalore but came to Chennai at the behest of Semmangudi mama who sent me to scholar

Shri. S.R. Janakiraman to assist him in his research on analysis of Ragas essayed in Tulaja's Sangita Saramruta, at the Music Academy as a research Assistant for 2 ½ years. I enjoyed my work with this brilliant musicologist and research on Shaji's raga lakshanas was yet another eye opener for teaching music through relating practice with theory. This exposure finally paved the way for starting a modern gurukulam envisaging building up overall values in students, unlike an ordinary music school! My Guru also did not see performance as a goal for me but encouraged me to teach and pass on my heritage to my students. I enjoy both teaching and performing. While teaching one learns a lot. Sometimes while teaching one tends to notice shortcomings missed while performing. I already had an aptitude for teaching as there were many teachers in the family. I got training for teaching from Semmangudi Mama.

**Tell us about your institution Bala Brundam Sangita Gurukulam.**

A different kind of gurukulam took shape in my mind for grooming children not only in music but to instill overall values of life in them and enrich them in all aspects of life along with music. This concept was visualised by my husband when I was asked to make a group presentation of devotional songs along with 17 children trained by me, at the Music Academy, during the music season in December 1993. The group was named Bala Brundam and the name stayed for our Gurukulam as well. I prefer to take children in the beginning stage who are ready to stay for atleast 10 years, pursue music or allied subjects, even in college. In other words, we take only students who are totally dedicated, committed and serious about taking music as a career. We insist on traditional dress codes which gives them comfort for sitting with crossed legs for hours together. As the students

spend most of the time here, they even do their homework with the help of senior students. My students are very good in academics too, scoring very high marks. Many kids learn languages like Sanskrit, Telugu and they are made to recite Aditya Hrudayam, Shabdamanjari etc regularly before starting music lessons. They also attend Yoga classes. After acquiring a certain level of knowledge in music, they are encouraged to learn instrumental music from good teachers. We arrange special sessions with expert musicians like J. Venkataraman and Akella Mallikarjuna Sharma on laya aspects. The students are taken on educational tours which are normally combined with performances. For example, I have been performing Navavarana kritis along with my students in the morning after Sri Chakra Pooja at the Dikshitar Mandapam in Tiruvapur for Muthuswamy Dikshitar's Jayanti celebration on Krithikai star in Panguni month for the past 18 years. I also give a concert exclusively of Dikshitar Kritis in the evening, as a homage to the great composer, who is my favourite composer. They are also taken to places and temples on which Dikshitar has composed songs so that they get a feel of the compositions. That is what makes them stand out in tough competitions and performances. In fact 5 of my students have bagged the coveted 'Sangita Sri' title awarded by Rasika Ranjana Sabha of Trichy. Eight of my students are AIR music competition prize winners and graded artistes of All India Radio. Some are already in A grade and faculty members in colleges and are working towards their doctoral thesis.

**Do you have students at the performing level?**

Yes, I have some senior students like Padma Sugavanam and Kavita Ramnath who are post graduates and research scholars in music and

have attained concert standard and I encourage them to take up concert opportunities. Some of the senior students handle the beginners classes at the three branches of Bala Brundam in the city. But I do not let my students perform on stage until I feel they are ready and ripe for it. I do not want my students to run after concerts when they should be learning more and more at that young age rather than marketing themselves.

**Is your teaching method different? Tell us about the revised curriculum for students of Carnatic Music (Vocal) devised and designed by you?**

I do not teach the Swaravalis in the raga Mayamalavagowla as in the traditional system. I teach the basic exercises in Mohanam, an audava raga with five bright notes. In audava ragas, the distance between each swara is more, so it is easier for children to intone. Different kinds of exercises required for a strong foundation in Swarasthana as well as laya are then taught. A few simple songs, small namavalis and slokas in Mohanam are also taught to keep their interest alive. After a student is competent in handling Mohana raga, other ragas with 5 notes like Suddha Saveri, Gambhira Nattai, Amrutavarshini etc are introduced. In this way, in two years they can sing any complicated ragas with accurate swarasthanam and Kalapramana. A beginner can sing the bright notes in a full voice with more ease. I don't think the rishabha and dhaivata of Mayamalavagowla can be explained easily to a beginner. I have brought out a book titled 'Bodhana' expatiating this new system, for private circulation, which has been found useful by the students. Audio CDs of this new method lessons have also been released through Charsur. I follow this system as visiting professor in Kalakshetra as well, as I have been given freedom to teach in my method and am

not bound by their syllabus. I have a long association with Kalakshetra and have even composed music for their dance dramas.

**How did you find the experience of composing music for dance dramas?**

It added a new dimension to my music. I sang for Periya Sharada Teacher's production of one hour feature on Rukmini Devi for her birth centenary. That helped me in getting the feel of how to sing for dance to suit the mood. I also composed music for the Sanskrit ballet 'Ahimsashraya Ashoka' for dancer Krishnaveni Lakshmanan, ex-principal of Kalakshetra and Geetha Bharatam with 100 dancers dancing to gitams, jatiswarams etc. My Senior students sat with me and saw me actually composing music for the lyrics, which is again on the job training for them. They also participate in the discussions, sometimes with suggestions of their own and write notations. It was indeed a very enriching experience.

**You are known for your thematic presentations, in the foot steps of your guru. Tell us about them.**

I have produced a number of thematic presentations, tuned songs as per requirement and staged them with my disciples such as Pahlada Bhakti Vijayam (at 50 venues) Nauka Charitram, Krishna Leela Tarangini, Devi Darshanam, Ramanubhavam, Guruguho Jayati, Varuna Ragam, Shivaya Namaha and Eternal India comprising different compositions depicting Sanatana Dharma. I have had the privilege of presenting 'Pahlada Bhakti Vijayam' in the presence of late Smt. M.S. Subbulakshmi on the occasion of Shri T.S. Sadashivam's death anniversary at her request. I have also presented thematic concerts on single composers like Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer, Patnam Subramanya Iyer, Muthuswamy Dikshitar, Swathi Tirunal and Spencer Venugopal for All

India Radio and other Sabhas. I have made a presentation on the genius of Dikshitar in handling Vivadi ragas. This adds a lot of variety to your repertoire and wide exposure for students to learn more kritis.

**To what extent did learning Hindustani Music influence your musical acumen or help further your musical sensitivity? Can a student learn both Hindustani & Carnatic music simultaneously and maintain the purity and tradition of each style without infringing on the other?**

Learning Hindustani music from the great C. H. Bhim Shankar Rao at the Govt. Music College, Hyderabad made me understand the beauty of Vilamba Kalam i.e. slow speed with the immense possibilities of creativity in Khayal singing within the frame work, and voice production with open throated singing using different registers by gliding from one note to another with absolute ease and flow and grip on laya. I could sing Hindustani music in 6 ½ kattai. Regarding learning both Carnatic & Hindustani styles simultaneously, I feel that one should first try to consolidate in one style to such an extent that there is no fear of mixing one style with another. Each style should be practised and sung without swerving from its tradition. It is important to maintain each style in its own purity. More often than not, the student who tries to learn both simultaneously may end up mastering neither.

**Coming down to a different plane of mundane things, what is your take on Jugalbandi and fusion concerts? What do you think of the new trend of learning Carnatic Music 'on line' and teaching on telephone?**

(With a mischievous chuckle) Fusion more often than not ends up in confusion or diffusion!

Jugalbandi is like a combination of Biriyani & Vethakkuzhambu. It is difficult to match them or combine them. Of course it has its novelty value which will not sustain but wear off. I feel learning 'on line' or through telephone is a rather poor compensation for learning from 'Gurumukham'.

**What do you think of the new generation musicians? How do you subscribe to the recent trend of classical musicians taking to film music for popularity and fame?**

The new generation musicians are highly intelligent and analytical in their approach but generally lack patience to develop themselves. They want to get noticed at an early stage, may be because of the onset of electronic media and media hype. There is nothing wrong for a classical singer to sing film music so long as both are not mixed but kept as separate entities. In fact there are many film songs which are brilliant compositions.

**How do we keep children interested in learning classical music in the present**



**scenario of various distractions like TV, computer games, internet, films etc? What is the future of Carnatic music like?**

It is our duty to train good teachers who will keep the interest alive by designing an easy and appealing way of learning music, at the same time making it interesting and exciting. This is exactly what I have done in my project on analyzing and restructuring the curriculum for music students. I have big dreams of establishing a full fledged self supporting institution, perhaps another Kalakshetra, for preserving and passing on what I have imbibed with such great love and passion. I want to pass on the torch of my music to the next generation and I am happy that the tradition is already passed on. I am sure it will be carried on by my students who are well trained by my husband in all the aspects of running an institution. That is the only way we pay homage to our guru and to this great tradition.

## A word of appreciation

We thank Shri P. N. Krishnamoorthy, who served as our editor and Shri V. Vamanan, who served as our Hon. Joint Editor for their exemplary efforts in steering the edition of 'Shanmukha' thus far.

## IRAYIMMAN THAMPI - DOYEN AMONG KERALA COMPOSERS

by Dr. S. Bhagyalekshmi

'OMANATHINKAL KIDAVO' is a famous lullaby that lingers in the lips of each and every mother of Kerala. Almost all the children of this region will be familiar with the lines of this lullaby even when they are in the cradle. The soothing and sweet strains of these lines put the child to good sleep and calm.

The person credited with the authorship of this famous lullaby is none other than the famous poet Laureate and Father of Malayalam lullaby known as Irayimman Thampi, affectionately called "Thampi maman" by the near and dear ones. Ravi Varman Thampi as he was named had the good fortune of being a Minister in the court of three rulers of Travancore namely. H.H. Karthika Thirunal Balarama Varma, H.H. Swathi Thirunal Maharaja and H.H. Uthram Thirunal. Thampi was the Asthana vidwan in their court. He established his personality as a prominent Vaggeyakara, Musician, author of three Attakadhas and Poet. He was also a Guru of H.H. Swathi Thirunal Maharaja.

A native of Travancore, Thampi was born in the year-1782 (M.E. 958), in the Puthumana Amma veedu situated in Karamana in Travancore. His ancestors were related to the Vanchiraja family. He had his initial education from his father, later from Muchhaat Sankaran Elayat. He attained Mastery over Sanskrit, Sastra, Vyakaranam and Literature.

After living a full life of more than seven decades, he passed away in 1856.

### His Contributions:

Thampi lived in Travancore during the Golden Era of Travancore dynasty. He led a life of a Naadapasaka, always engaged in activities related to Music, Literature, Poetry etc. He was very close to Swathi Thirunal Maharaja. The Maharaja consulted him and asked his opinion regarding compositions. Thampi mainly

composed in Malayalam language and Manipravalam (a mixture of Malayalam and Sanskrit). His contributions included compositions of Carnatic Classical Music, Folk songs, Kathakali, Mohini Attam, Thiruvathirakali, etc.

The musical compositions of Irayimman Thampi can be categorised into three groups such as Varnas, Keerthanas and Padas. They are nearly hundred comprising of 5 varnas, 39 keerthanas, 22 padas, three Attakadhas, Navarathri Prabandhas, Lullaby, Kummi, Thiruvathiraikali pattu, etc. The most famous of his compositions is the above mentioned lullaby Omanathinkal set in Navaroj raga and Misra Chappu tala. This was believed to have been composed by him when H.H. Swathi Thirunal Maharaja was born. The thematic content of this lullaby reveals the happiness of the whole dynasty at the birth of a male child to the royal family. He describes the beauty and grandeur of the child who is lying in the cradle. The flow of diction and rhythm of the lullaby is such that it suggests the movement of the cradle. He also felt that it should be so simple that every mother should sing or hum it. H. H. Swathi Thirunal Maharaja was so fond of the lullaby that often he used to listen to this from his aunt. The sahitya as well as sangeetha (Maathu and Dhatu) are very simple and enjoyable.

**Varnas:** Thampi has to his credit 5 tana varnas in the following ragas and talas

Ambaa Gauri	Arabhi	Jhampa
Manasi me partitaapam	Sankarabharanam	Adi
Thavasaabhi matha	Bhairavi	Rupaka
Saayam kim Me	Ailambari	Chempata
Haasa loka	Punnagavarali	Chempata

In all these the Padavarnas have sahitya for all the angas including Chittasvaras and charana svaras. The Nayakaa is the Maharaja himself.

The Arabhi varnam is in praise of the Goddess of Thiruvarettu kavu, the family diety. In all the varnas we come across literary beauties like Svarakshara, Praasa etc. In the Sankarabharana varna, 'Manasi me parithaapam', in the Utharaardha portion we find Svarakshara beauty. Each charana svara has got 8 avarthanas with sahitya embellished with Dviteeyakshara prasa. Both Poorvardha and Utharaardha are of equal length. All the varnas are in Rakthi ragas and possess raga ranjakatva.

He has made use of Manipravalam for the language. There is enough scope for Abhinaya and Adavu presentation so that it can be presented in Mohini Attam. One can find a mingling of Taana and Pada varnas in this varnas. In the Arabhi varnam one can find some similarities with Saadhinchane, the famous pancharatna of Tyagarajaswami.

### KEERTHANAS:

Irayimman Thampi has to his credit nearly 39 keerthanas in Malayalam and Manipravalam, which have many similarities with those of H.H. Swathi Thirunal Maharaja. In his krithis importance is given for musical and literary aspects having scope for improvisation. Most of the krithis have the angas Pallavi, Anupallavi and multiple charanas. Some are decorated with Chittasvaras also. His krithis are full of literary and thematic excellence and high devotion. He has made use of ragas of Carnatic music such as Kalyani, Neelambari, Athaana, Thodi, Mohanam, Pantuvarali, Saveri, Keeravani, Kharaharapriya, Simhendra Madhyama and many other major janya ragas. In addition he has made use of rare ragas like Jingala, Maanchi, Kukubha etc. Perhaps he is the first to have composed in Kukubha raga. Surabandahari is a krithi in Kukubha raga derived from the 15th mela Mayamalavagaula and is a shadja varja vakra raga.

His krithis and varnas earned for him a place next to H.H. Swathi Thirunal Maharaja. His

keerthanas reveal his musical and literary scholarship. 'Karuna cheyvaan' in Sri ragam, Atimalarina in Mukhari, Kaatyaayani in Sankarabharanam, Sambho Gaureesa in Kedaragaula, Paradevathe in Thodi, Paahi mam giritanaya in Saveri, Neelakantha paahi in Jonpuri are some of the popular compositions of Thampi.

### PADAAS:

Like Swathi Thirunal Maharaja, Irayimman Thampi has composed nearly 25 padas ideal as concert and dance pieces. The thematic content underlying the padas is Srīngara or Prema bhakthi of different types. The hero or Nayaka of these padas is Maharaja himself. In some, H.H. Uthram Thirunal is also made the Nayaka. His padas are filled with musical lustre, bhava, excellence, literary beauty and above all devotional fervour which add to the greatness of the padas.

For the padas he has selected mainly Rakthi ragas which suit well with the bhava and theme underlying the padas. The major ragas used for the padas are Kamboji, Sankarabharanam, Bhairavi, Neelambari, Bilahari, Hamsanandi, Surutti, Sri ragam, Punnagavarali etc. In addition he has also attempted rare ragas like Indisa, Maaradhanasi, Kanakkurinji, Samanthamalahari, Dukha khandaram etc; and many of these ragas belonged to Kerala music. The different types of Nayikas such as Virahotkhanditha, Svadhinabhatrika, Vasakasajja and Vipralabdha are presented in the padas.

On an analysis we can conclude:

1. Padas had scope for detailed abhinaya
2. Couched in simple music and rhythm but with elegance and charm.
3. Uddhipaka srīngara is dealt in some padas
4. Descriptive or Varnana type wherein the beauty of each anga of Nayika is described to full extent by the Nayaka.

5. Some padas are Gaanarasa pradhana while others are mathu, bhava pradhana.
6. Some padas are stressed with Sringara bhava.
7. Padas having prasa beauties.
8. Some padas are in praise of the royal family members especially Rugmini Bhairam Thampuratti, the beloved sister of Swathi Tirunal Maharaja.

Among the other literary songs, kilipattu of Irayimman Thampi deserves special mention. Raasakreeda, Vashishtam kilipattu are treatises in Malayalam literature.

Murajapa Paana is another work describing the Murajapa conducted in Sree Padmanabhaswami temple and also about the details of the temple. In addition he has composed certain songs intended for the festival Onam grouped as Onapaattukal, Kummi pattukal etc. He has to his credit certain compositions intended purely for dance, grouped as Natya prabandhas, comprising of Pada varanas, padas etc.

#### ATTAKADHA TRAYAM:

He is considered the doyen among the Attakadha composers. His three Attakadhas also contain beautiful padas ideal for dance and Kathakali. Three Attakadhas are Keechaka vadham, Uthara Svayamvaram and Dakshayaagam. In Uthara Svayamvaram there is a pada wherein Duryodhana presents a peacock dance beautifully. In all the three, the story is couched in a vivid picturesque manner. The selection of ragas, rhythm, tala, tempo as well as diction and vocabulary are highly suitable for the situation and theme. His Attakadhas reveal his genius and scholarship in music literature, Kathakali and dance. In his Attakadhas Thampi has tried to combine Bhakthi and Sringera along with other sentiments. The presentation of characters, their dialogues, musical stature, Cholkettus,

Kalaasas, dramatization and stage arrangements etc. reveal his mastery, adeptness and command over the language and music. His proficiency in Epics and Puranas are also evident from his Attakadhas. It is recorded history that he wrote the Attakadha 'Keechaka vadham' at the age of 16. In addition to padas he has included Dandakam, Seesapadyam, alokas, etc. The famous Dandakam in Keechaka Vadham 'Kshoneendra patniyude' itself is enough to reveal his proficiency in the language and Kathakali. It is coated with thought provoking, meaningful and high literary and poetical ideas. Herein the helpless condition of a woman in Panchali is described in a touching manner. Various sentiments like fear, sorrow, helplessness, anxiety, anger are picturised beautifully.

The famous Kummi 'Veeravirata kumara vibho' in Utharasvayamvaram Kathakali is an ideal piece for Kaikottikkali and kummi, the folk dance form of Kerala. This Attakadha is also full of incidents, action packed and thrilling. The story is taken from Aaranyaparva of Mahabharatham. All the padas have got immense scope for Abhinaya in detail. The ragas used are Sankarabharanam, Mukari, Bhairavi, Ahari, Kedaragaula, Dhanyaasi, Malahari, Mohanam, Erikkilakamodari, Kalyani, Vegada, Useni, Madhyamavathi and many others. In addition he has made use of some ragas having Kerala origin like Indisa, Gopikavasantham, Khandaaram, Paadi, Maaradhanaasi, etc. These are quite familiar in Sopana Sangeetha the distinctive musical style of Travancore. The rhythmic and musical structure were in accordance with the situation of the story as well as character.

The famous pada Harinaakshi from Keechaka vadham in Kamboji reveals the raga bhava of kamboji in full extent. Thampi composed Utharasvayamvaram after Keechaka vadham. In both, the opening pada is set in Sankarabharana. The famous sloka

'Seshesayaanam vihagesayaanam, Dhootharijaatham srithapaarijatham, Seshaalayesam Kamalaalayasam, Sree Padmanabham Bhajanjanaabham' is in the form of a mangalam like the Bhujagasaayinam of H.H. Swathi Tirunal Maharaja. In Utharasvayamvaram the presentation of Ekalochana abhinayam of Duryodhana is very significant in Kathakali. The pada is 'Kalyani kaanka mama' in Paadi raga presented with immense abhinaya and Sringara bhava. For this the character is supposed to show anger in one eye and sringera in the next eye simultaneously. It requires high skill and proficiency to show this abhinaya.

In Daksha yagam, the story is taken from Siva Mahatmyam from Bhagavatham Chathurtha Skanda. One can find the fusion of Rath and Bhakthi in most of his padas. He has introduced all the important incidents with dramatic dialogues and padas with high imageries. This has been composed at the request of H. H. Uthram Tirunal. The variety of the padas, their presentation with highly literary and musical significances, character presentation and its novelty, brevity in inclusion of scenes, all have earned for him a supreme status among the Attakadha composers of Travancore. Another noteworthy feature is that his Attakashas can be appreciated by all including the learned as well as the laymen. While the slokas are in Sanskrit, Padas are in Malayalam.

In all his Attakadhas, he has made use of mainly the ragas and talas of Sopana Sangeetha along with the Karnatic ragas and talas. Some of the prominent ragas used are Kaanakurinj, Paadi, Samanthamalahari, Maaradhanasi, Khandaaram, Gopikavasantham, Indisa, etc. The ragas used by Thampi in some padas are changed and presented now a days differently as also is the case with Swathi's compositions. For eg; the pada Neelakantha paahi in Malahari is now a days presented in Jonpuri. The mangalam Agendra bhooshitham is set in

Puraneer raga belonging to Sopana Sangeetha.

#### NAVARATHRI PRABANDHA

As the name suggests, this is intended to be presented during the navarathri festival. The navarathri festival conducted in Travancore palace is described in detail. This is styled in the form of a long poetic song preceeded with a sloka. The procession starting from poojapura mandapam is dealt in detail in the song in Yadukulakamboji. The first day raga is in Pantuvrali. The third one is in Nadanamakriya followed by one in Punnagavali. There are four khandas set in the above four ragas. The prabandhas have got long stanzas without the division of angas like the Pallavi, Anupallavi with multiple charanas. Each song is preceeded by a sloka or virutham. The beauty and grandeur of the Golden Chariot and the procession form the theme for the third portion, whereas in the last the return procession, Ezhunellathu, is described.

This is in Dravida vritta. There is no place given for sangathis or improvisation. The song is to be sung continuously. The description of Navarathri festival is done in an elaborate manner, touching upon each and every detail. It commences with the description of idols brought from Padmanabhapuram palace on the first day, followed by the rites performed till the tenth day.

It seems that Thampi has composed Navarathri Prabandha similar to that of the Utsava Prabandha of Swathi Thirunal Maharaja, wherein the 10 day festival of Sreepadmanabha swami forms the theme. The Araatu is described in full grandeur and beauty.

Irayimman Thampi was one of the doyens of the great composers of Travancore who lived during the Golden Era of Music in the history of Travancore. Without any exaggeration he is one of the Trio of Malayalam literature or the Kavitravam of Malayalam. □



Our best wishes to the various projects of  
Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha



## M/s. BARVE CONSULTANTS

- ★ Architects & Interior Designers
- ★ Structural Engineers & RCC Designers
- ★ Structural Auditors
- ★ Consultants for Special Structural Repairs
- ★ Registered Valuers
- ★ Project Management Consultants



Barve House, Plot No. 177-B,  
Sandu Road, Chembur, Mumbai - 400 071.

☎ : 2528 6084 / 2528 8292

Fax : 2528 8993 E-mail: sbarve@vsnl.com

## MOKSHAMU GALADA .....

*With humility and reverence* Shyamala Sajnani

**W**hat indeed is the true aim of our lives? Without any doubt, it is realising the divinity within ourselves. Self-realised Gurus say that it takes thousands of births for a person to even start questioning about our presence in this world. The next step would be to wonder who we are and where we come from.

This is the beginning and the goal is Moksha. Not many people who are learning music may understand that they have been blessed with that very tool, which can take them to salvation.

Today music takes many forms the world over, different styles of music are played and they are all indeed very beautiful, aesthetic and enjoyable. But can all forms of music take us to salvation?

Shri Krishna while talking about Right Action (Karma), tells Arjuna that Right Action is that which leads the mind of the doer away from sense enslavement to soul enjoyment. The Bhagavad Gita, chapter IV, verse 17, tells us that "Harmonious music raises the listener's consciousness whereas music with vibrations other than harmonious gives rise to base emotions".

Would it then be wrong to say, that a person on the path to Moksha should probably not be over indulging in music which is not devotional? Then it would be surely right to say that one who is exposed to harmonious music and practices it without ego and with devotion will indeed evolve spiritually as well.

As a student of Karnatic Music, I feel blessed

to have been exposed to that kind of music which not only satisfies my sense of hearing on a lower level, sharpens my mind and intellect with its rhythmic patterns on a higher level but actually purifies my soul at the highest level

I would like to say that we are blessed to have Gurus who teach us this form of music. When we learn the songs of Thyagaraja Swami, Shri Muthuswamy Dikshitar, Shri Syama Shastri, Shri Purandaradasa and other great composers, in some form they teach us something more than music; they teach us the hidden truth of life. We should consider what they tell us very seriously.

Saint Thyagaraja was an ardent devotee of Lord Rama. To quote Shri Suddhananda Bharati - "His father was Rama Brahman, his book was the immortal epic of Valmiki, the Ramayana; his mantra was Rama, his God was Rama and his life was a stream of Rama Consciousness. The composer completed chanting Rama Nama 96 crore times and in his 38th year had a full vision of Lord Rama.

Who else but Saint Thyagaraja would be a fitting example to follow? All his instructions are in his songs in simple language for even a lay man to understand.

From his thousands of songs any one can give us the depth of his devotion. He has clearly cautioned all who care to pay heed "Sangita Gyanamu Bhakthivina, Sanmargamu Erugadu." It translates as, "Music without devotion does not lead you in the right path".

To him the right path was nothing but attaining Rama's feet.

Mokshamu Galada .... Sadbhakthi Sangeeta Gyana Viheenulaku. He sang in Saramati. Is it possible for anyone but realised souls to attain salvation? Is it possible for anyone who is not devoted to the Lord and who does not have the knowledge of music to attain salvation?

Thyagaraja did not see music and devotion as apart from each other. To him music was the path to salvation. How many of us have taken him seriously? Is learning Karnatic music all about being able to sing or play Mokashamu Galada in the right manner with the proper tala krama and presenting it in public, so that we can be appreciated? Yes, it is very important to learn to render the song well and to be able to reproduce it with confidence and reverence, whether in a Sabha, competition or a small group. All great Vidwans have taken part in competitions and to prove our prowess is a very positive approach.

However, Karnatic music does not stop there. It promises you something greater than worldly stages and platforms to perform. Thyagaraja sang of 'Ramabhakthi Samrajyam'. He spoke of an Empire of a completely different kind. In rendering the music without pride or ego and complete devotion and absorption one can attain that empire.

In the Charanam of Mokshamu Galada, Thyagaraja Swami says "Prananala Samyogamu Valla, Pranava Nadamu Saptasvarmulai Barag". Prana or the vital force which keeps us alive and that which is every

where, is responsible for the existence of the universe. When this prana comes in touch with fire it produces the sound of 'AUM' or Pranava. The seven notes that resound in us are caused in this manner. That is how sacred music is. It is this Pranava in our spine that causes the seven notes. The same principle can be applied for instruments as well. It is the Prana through the fingers that produces the seven notes on an instrument through the seven chakras.

Veena, which is in the hands of Saraswathi, is a symbol of spiritual evolution. This instrument was used for Nada Yoga. Thyagaraja Swami said "Veena Vadana Loludai Shivamano Vidhamerugaru." Which means, not many people know that Lord Shiva derives immense pleasure from listening to music from the Veena.

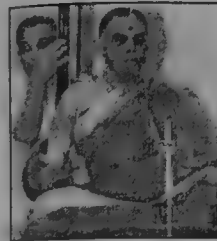
This re-assurance has been given to us by not just somebody, but someone who has seen it all, Saint Thyagaraja himself. He has clearly told all the students of music in his song that we can attain salvation through music and that the origin of music is from Pranava itself or 'AUM'. None other than Lord Shiva is pleased by a pure devotional piece of music rendered to him. Can we ask for better audience? Do we realize now what a tool has been handed to us, a select few, who are training in this form of music? With something so magnificent at our disposal, given so freely to us by our beloved God and our wonderful Gurus, it is up to each one of us to use it.



## INTERVIEW

### MUSIC IS HER LIFEBLOOD

by Sudha Subramaniam



**F**or Suguna Varadachari, the turning point in her life came when she won a two-and-a-half year scholarship to study with Musiri. One amongst the last batch of his sishyas, alongwith Suguna

Purushoththaman, Padma Narayanaswami, Prema Sukumar and Mani Krishnaswami, she pursued her dream with steadfastness and sincerity. All through her musical career, Suguna's regular AIR shows kept her moving ahead.

Suguna later taught music at the University of Madras from 1984-2004. She is happy that many of her students share her love of music and are very good and well-appreciated performers.

Looking back, as a young girl, Suguna Varadachari yearned to learn music. Guru P.K.Rajagopalachariar, a disciple of Tiger Varadachariar, kindled this thirst further.

Life dealt Suguna a cruel blow when she lost her father. Her mother took to tailoring, but let Suguna opt for music as a special subject at Lady Sivaswami School. Suguna also underwent training at the Rasika Ranjani Sabha's school with reputed teachers such as Srinivasa Iyengar, A.S.Panchapakesa Iyer, Rajam Iyer, Kumbakonam Sankaran, and Kalpakam Swaminathan.

Later when she joined the Central College of Carnatic Music, there were musicians of the like of Kalyanakrishna Bhagavatar, Brinda, Budalur

Krishnamurti Sastrigal, Musiri Subramania Iyer, etc.

Suguna recalls with fondness, gurus like Mudicondan Venkatrama Iyer and Jayammal.

Way back in 1982, after marriage, Suguna took lessons from Calcutta Krishnamurti.

Audience who have heard her sing, recall with nostalgia, Suguna Varadachari's rendition of Anandabhairavi, which touched the chords of one's heart, her rendition of 'O Rangasaayi', of Syama Shastri's 'O Jagadamba' rooted in patanthara.

Speaking to this extraordinarily talented individual who had her roots in the most ordinary of beginnings, a music-lover is thrilled with the shared thoughts and ideas.

The talk with Suguna provides an insight into a music-lover's heart. Her recent visit to the Shanmukhananda Sabha where she gave a concert, provided the opportunity to talk to her.

Q) What does music mean to you?

A) Music is my lifeblood. Music courses through my veins. It is my very breath. For me, to sing is a necessity.

From early childhood, music has held a fascination for me. My mind is forever singing. Music has mingled so much within me that just as one cannot survive without air, I cannot survive without music.

Q) How would you describe the 'World of Music' in today's changing times?

A) Indeed, nothing is as permanent as change. I am an ardent lover and exponent

of Carnatic music. For me, the monetary aspects, name and fame bear no consideration in comparison to the rich depths of classical music.

With the changing times, the audience appreciation for 'tukhadas' has increased. As far as other western styles of music like rock, pop, etc. are concerned, I am totally ignorant of their intricacies, although listening to any good music is something I relish. Still, there is a bit of the fanatic in me when it comes to Carnatic music, which I worship. Hindustani music too has depth and style. Light music and film songs are very much in vogue and several good singers do venture and retain themselves in the film-singing circuit. I would say that the commercial world definitely builds its material from the aesthetic world. Audience appreciation is one important performance-boosting factor in all avenues of music.

- Q) Do you feel that the 'Gurukula Sampradaya' system of imparting knowledge in music is ideal and must be fostered even today?
- A) Gone are the days when we were bound by limitations of place, caste, creed, race or sex. Today we are poised on global frontiers. The entire world is one big open book of learning. While the charm, the austerity and the devotedness and singularity of purpose in the ancient Gurukula system can never be understated, one cannot put the clock back. Youngsters today are used to mobiles, handycams, laptops, net-downloads and so much more. These trends can never match with Gurukul style, which needs total dedication to a singular cause. Secondly, educational demands on students today are very high. Career and growth plans too are factors to be

reckoned with. Certain colleges in Chennai do offer music. So also, learning music along with regular education is a more workable proposition. The talented can always pursue it further.

However, a good Guru is very essential. Listening to cassettes, CDs, etc. will not provide in-depth learning. To imbibe music, one must prostrate at the feet of the Guru. Worthy Gurus have worthy students and vice-versa.

- Q) What do you have to say of the Sabhas and their contribution towards musicians and music-lovers?
- A) Indeed, Sabhas are a vital link between the musicians and the rasikas. However, some Sabhas are better off than others. A plethora of Sabhas have mushroomed and each one has to face the problems of funding, organizing good Kutcheris, collections from members, etc. I recall S.V.Krishnan (now in his heavenly abode) who once spearheaded the 'Raaga Sudha Naada Inbham' Sabha. The co-ordination in the Sabha, the care bestowed on the artistes and the involvement and value given are forever etched in my memory. To deliver fine music requires involvement, values and a serene and peaceful functioning.
- Q) Thank you so much. Do you have any word of advice for students of music?
- A) I can only say that a hard-core Carnatic musician like me moves on only one track with singular devotion. I know no other path and cannot fit myself anywhere else. For those who love this path, no words need be said. The expressions of music hold an eternal language that music-lovers alone can comprehend.

## PERCUSSIONS IN CARNATIC MUSIC CONCERTS - A Retrospect

by Layakala Prathibhamani Vidwan H. S.Sudhindra

Pranams to my gurus, Vidwan Shri M Vasudeva Rao & Vidwan Shri Srimushnam V. Raja Rao, many other senior Vidwans and Vidushis who have helped me to write this article.

There are many percussion instruments used in Carnatic music concerts. We more often refer to Mrudangam as the lead percussion instrument. The other percussions follow the Mrudangam in general.

As far as Carnatic music concert is concerned, playing (or following) for a song is the foremost duty of a Mrudangam artist. In order to have a good following technique, one should have a good knowledge in vocal. The intricacies in a song should be noted before accompanying. It's even more difficult to play Mrudangam for an instrumental concert than a vocal concert. Nowadays, youngsters play more for the thala than to the rendering of the main artiste. One of the reasons for such a performance could be a sharp increase in the mediocre artists. This does not mean that, they should not be encouraged. It means that they should be corrected with constructive criticism to improve their knowledge. Probably this could be a very good way of improving the general standard above average to pave way for the best.

It would be more appropriate for each one on stage to know the other faculties for the best performance. For eg, a Mrudangam artist having the knowledge of vocal, and vice-versa. It is not at all an extra qualification but a necessity. There are certain krithis in particular ragas for which the percussion should be played on a low key. Eg: sama, sahana, mukhari etc. This should more be experienced than taught. Playing for a song is different from playing to a thala.

If each one does not understand the other faculties on stage, anything played brilliantly or sung goes unobserved. We can take the

example of Mrudangam artist simply playing for the thala or laya but never for the song or its bhava due to lack of knowledge of the song. Also if a Mrudangam artist or violin artist exhibits something brilliant, he is not hailed by the singer only due to his lack of knowledge. (Vice-versa) In any case the patantharam plays an important role.

The next thing about the percussion is Thani. Thani is a Tamil word meaning a solo turn as applied to Carnatic music. The moment a thani avarthanam starts, it is like an interval to most of the audience. Many say that they do not understand anything in a thani avarthanam. True, but did they understand everything in a song? The raga, the grammar, sahitya, neraval, swaraprasthara? Definitely not. It is an insult not only to the percussion artist but also to percussive art.

The major reasons for the **failure of a thani avarthanam** is :

- 1) It is always at the fag end of the concert.
- 2) This might be because the performer (say the vocal artist) would have fewer opportunities to sing and would like to exhibit everything he knows in a single concert.
- 3) The Mrudangam artist would exceed the time limits, spoiling the effect of a concert.
- 4) People would have come from a very long distance and would prefer to reach home early, which is a very genuine reason. They are pretty sure that only thukkadas will be rendered after the thani avarthanam.
- 5) Giving a thani in an intricate thala leads to more grammar than enjoyment. This could only be done in a vidwat sadas and not during the regular concerts.
- 6) The other reason for the failure may also be due to lack of melody. This lies completely in the hands of an artist. Lack of using Gumukis, handling of the

instruments, proper acoustics will affect the listeners' interests.

- 7) When more than one percussion instrument is there in a concert it is advisable to have a good rapport during the solo turns else it would be a nightmare for the audience.
- 8) It is worth mentioning that tabla is more effective to a layman than Mrudangam. The logic behind this is, a tabla is held vertically and two drumheads of this tabla are directed towards the mike. As a result, whatever is played on both drumheads is clearly heard. But Mrudangam is held horizontally and only one mike is used. The left is absolutely not taken care of. People are under the impression that even one mike is not essential which is very untrue. Two mikes are definitely needed and care must be taken not to raise the volume beyond optimum points. The effect of thani is very much dependent on this factor.

Most of the performers be it vocal, violin or the percussion etc take the audience for a ride. It should be noted that without good audience the concert can never end up with success. When people come to a concert from long distances they expect to go back home happily. It's the prime duty of each artist to ensure that they are entertained and educated in a concert. It is worth noting the above points for a successful concert or thani in future.

A rapport should be established between the performers before a concert starts, and never allow a thani at the lag end. Also, a Mrudangam artist should not play for more than approximately 5-6 minutes (per hour). Thani avarthanams should be made more interesting rather than only playing grammar. I don't mean to say that we should entertain them with gimmicks. It's more appropriate to play simple and catchy rhythms, good sound or naadam emanating from the instrument and so on.

The role of a sahavadya (ghatam, morsing etc ...) in a concert is also very important. He has more work to do, like he should play for the

song and also anticipate the methods employed by a Mrudangam artist to follow the song. Hence he has to adjust himself to two different manodharmas without letting out his individuality. In general, it is very essential to know where not to play than where to play for any pakkavadyakkara. Actually the position of a sahavadyakkara is crucial on stage as he has to reply to the vocalists- during song rendering, with the violin artists- during neraval and swaraprasthara and also the Mrudangam artist for thani Avarthanam. In short, his responsibility is more in a concert.

It would be very surprising to know that music is based more on compositions in south India. In north India people prefer to hear the combination of melody instruments with percussions. It's even more surprising to know that only percussions take the lead role outside India. In our country people are of the opinion that percussion ensembles are not complete without a melody instrument. But, this is possible; we can have an independent percussion ensemble without any melody instrument. In case of drum festivals abroad, tickets are sold out one year before the concert is held. There might be only a single drum in that festival, with very little variations, unlike our drums(percussions), which are of very wide varieties, with lots of tonal variations and of course unlimited grammar. I hope this will be utilized to the maximum extent in the near future.

There are so many hurdles for a percussion artist to encounter in a concert. He has to overcome such troubles on the stage and many more off the stage, like maintaining the instrument which is an expensive affair. Costs are high and materials available are usually not satisfactory. Yet, the critics happily mention the violin, Mrudangam, ghatam ... assisted the vocalist or sometimes even worse that....were on the respective instruments!!!

All said and done "it is a team work for a successful concert".

7

## PAMPER YOURSELF WITH MUSIC

by Dr. T. V. Sairam

Life is short but life's journey can be tedious. The process of living is full of challenges, ups and downs, expectations and disappointments, pleasant and unpleasant feelings.

People come and go, events occur- all leaving an imprint in the mind space. While some of them are pleasant, some others could be unbearable and unreconcilable. No reasoning can assuage the pain in such bitter experiences. It is here that music can play a major role.

Music of your choice that makes you feel good can act as a mood elevator. By consciously diverting your mind away from the pain location, one could make the process of living less painful and more pleasant.

One can thus pamper one self with music, the same way a child indulges in eating a sweet meat of her choice.

Pampering oneself is necessary as we are living in a world dominated by reasons. Unfortunately everything which is life-giving and life-supporting is directly linked to creative, intuitive and emotional facet of our personality. While reason divides people, emotion brings in closeness and camaraderie. Music helps us in balancing ourselves so that we do not cease to be a compassionate human being.

**Music helps in expanding our identity beyond a limited ego-based definition of self.**

- Mitchell Gaynor, Physician

Music therapy - like music - is as old as the human civilization itself.

All the philosophers of ancient Greece believed in the healing role of music as did the ancient

Native Americans, who used chanting and other musical practices as part of their healing rituals. However, music therapy came to be regarded as a formal discipline only during the World War I, particularly in the United States, as there was a need to help the growing number of disabled soldiers in Veterans Administration hospitals.

Music therapy is the conscious deployment of sound and music with a view to induce relaxation, promote healing, enhance mental functioning, and create an overall sense of well-being. Though basically aimed as a preventive measure, music therapy is also reported to have turned out to be a cure in certain cases.

Music therapy can target both individuals as well as a group of individuals. Thus we can isolate the ideal musical structures and sound combinations that affect various human groups: unborn fetuses inside the pregnant women, children, teen-agers, adults, seniors and those who are terminally ill, awaiting the arrival of Death.

A typical music therapy session is conceived to involve the individuals in listening to or performing music selected by a trained guide.

Considered variously as a "holistic therapy", "complementary therapy", "creative arts therapy" or "expressive therapy", music therapy can be used alone or in conjunction with other therapies in a healing session. However, recent evidences indicate that in combination with other medical interventions, music therapy enhances their curative role

### Music therapy: The Mechanism

The mechanism involved in Music therapy is as mysterious as music itself. The complex nature of music is due to the fact that it is



strongly associated with our consciousness and also the individual tastes and preferences, likes and dislikes. It also has a strong regional fervour- as music could be distinguished variously as Eastern, Western, Folk, Classical, Cinematic and what not and each one of them variously affects its listeners. Some dislike one genre as the same genre is listened to with awe and veneration by some other people.

The research carried out so far *prima facie* indicates that before using music for prophylactic or therapeutic purposes, it is essential to study the individuals closely and based on their physical constitution and musical choice, musical structures or pieces have to be selected involving them in the process of selection.

It is noteworthy here that generalized preparation of music (e.g., music for the depressed, music for hypertension etc) targeted commercially in a massive scale in recent years have not very much clicked with the masses as their impact has been somewhat ambivalent.

### Musical Experience

Most people tend to experience a visceral reaction to music: a burst of energy upon hearing an upbeat song - with cymbals and drums - or a sense of calm during a soothing classical piece played in slow tempo and in strings.

Music therapy is actually built on this clear connection between music and mood. Several neurological studies indicate that music can even affect physiological functions, such as respiration, heart rate and blood pressure, as well. It has also been shown to lower amounts of the hormone cortisol, which becomes elevated under stress, and to increase the release of endorphins, the body's natural "feel-good" hormones.

Music plays a role psychologically as well. With its in-built rhythms, resonance, beats and lyrics, a melody can be a kind of language in and of itself. In appropriate combinations, it can be a powerful non-verbal assertion and consolation for its listeners. Because of this, music therapy can be used to help the mentally and physically disabled to come out of their shells and express themselves freely and fearlessly.

This author, on more than one occasion, has observed that music encourages introverted patients to become more free and outgoing with others and can be effectively used to draw schizophrenic and autistic patients out of their isolated cocoons.

Music therapy can also help the stroke victims and other patients with neurological disorders through a process called "entrainment." As these patients are given a diet of rhythmic music, their muscle movements become synchronized with the beat. As their motions become more regular and efficient, their motor skills improve in turn over a time - depending on the damages they have encountered previously. Entrainment can also induce a sedative, relaxing response if the music is based on rather a slow, steady rhythm and is constructed as an iterative structure as we find in slow bhajans and kirtans or in shloka-recitations.

Music therapy can also distract patients from their negative experiences (such as trauma due to irreparable loss or accident). It is essential that all trauma victims are exposed immediately to pleasant music of their choice in low decibels as a part of medication or surgery in hospitals and nursing homes. It has been proved that this therapy is an effective intervention in keeping the people's mind away from the pain locus, particularly in dental work, surgery and labour.

### Individual-based Therapeutic Session

As in psychotherapy or physiotherapy, music therapy involves the active participation of both the listeners and the guide.

A session in music therapy includes a number of tasks for a therapist: talking with the patient in order to identify the problems, symptoms and needs; assessing the physical, emotional and social personality of the patient along with communication abilities, and cognitive skills through the way he or she responds musically; designing an appropriate treatment program by selecting appropriate music most suitable for the patient-type. Such a treatment program will include playing or performing music, listening to music, consciously creating, improvising and feeling the musical structure for its therapeutic impact, talking freely about the images or feelings created by the musical inputs etc. It has been noticed that performing music with others having similar kind of problems/ ailments and interacting with them musically brings in a greater sense of relaxation and satisfaction. It is also gratifying to note that patients need not have any formal previous exposure to music in order to receive its benefits. On the contrary, it has been found that people with no previous knowledge/ exposure to music respond more quickly to music rather than those who have knowledge of it.

Recent studies reveal that music therapy is effective at promoting relaxation, relieving anxiety and stress, and treating depression. It welcomes and pampers people with emotional problems lovingly, like a mother to explore

feelings, make positive changes in mood, practice problem solving, and resolve conflicts. It can strengthen communication and physical coordination skills, and improve the physical and mental functioning of all those with neurological or developmental disorders. It has been used to complement the treatment of AIDS, stroke, Parkinson's, and cancer. Those with learning disabilities and speech and hearing problems have also found that music therapy could be helpful for them.

As the types of patients, treatment programs and durations- all vary, the music therapist seems to be facing more challenges than his client as he has to work in different settings and interact musically with a variety of clients located variously - in office, home, hospice, maternity ward, gym, post-operation ward, ICU children's nursery, old age home, prison, front office reception, educational institution, health clubs, leisure resorts and what not.

What he needs is not only flexibility and patience to cope up with the varying demands from such groups and individuals but also a sense of involvement, innovation and instant creativity abreast with the developments in the process of music making. He would face challenges even in correctly assessing the client's physical health, emotional well-being, social functioning, avenues for expression and communication. As a holistic medicine man perhaps he himself needs a dose of appropriate music, before he starts preaching the same to others.

After all, charity begins at home!



## HOMAGE TO SHRI S. SESHADRI

by 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan, I. A. S. Rtd.

*Kurai ondrum illai Marai Murti Kanna  
Kurai ondrum illai, Kanna,  
Kurai ondrum illai, Govinda!  
"Sreyo bhuyat sakala jananam*



He was a good man, in whom Religion and Arts converged and coalesced for decades with mutual affinity, understanding and serene productivity. Our ancients knew and this good gentleman

too knew full well that there is no Indian religion divorced of arts and *vice versa*. An active man to the last of his life on this planet, he was service-oriented with unsatiated outlook, enthusiasm, dedication and devotion, ever conscious of enduring results. Age failed to wither his infinite enthusiasm but most agreeably his anxiety and fervour to serve and achieve kept robust, fruitful pace with ageing. That is the insignia of a conscious, dedicated *Karma Yogi*. Few would have missed this good man clad in *pancha kaccham* style with flowing shirt and *angavastram* - (upper cloth) on with the Vaishnavite ever-fresh symbol prominently indicated on his smiling forehead. Born on January 31, 1921, he chose to free himself from his mortal body on June 3, 2007 to rejoin the Lord, to whom he was true to the last. This gentleman was Sri S. Seshadri.

Mumbai breathed the salubrious air of music, musicology and dance and much on the religious side, thanks to the selfless

endeavours of Sri Seshadri and men of like robust vision. A founder of the magnificent institution east of the Suez, Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha [1952] and lately a Trustee of it, he was founder of other institutions also such as:

Sri Krishna Gana Sabha [1943]:

Sri Vedanta Desika Sampradaya Sabha [1943] and

Balaji Bhakta Darshan Sabha [1979].

Quite justifiably, he had been honoured with titles such as:

*Sangita Seva Ratnam*, which truly he was.

*Sanmargadarshi*, which is attested by his work and associations; and

*Sanatana Dharma Rakshaka*, which is inscribed indelibly in his matchless service for Balaji Bhakta Darshan Sabha, etc. Some are born to serve and uphold the ancient and living culture and legacy of Bharat and he belonged to that illustrious tribe.

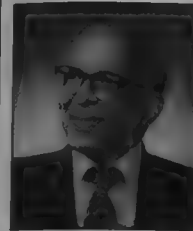
He had lived a full life. May his earnest life and endeavours remain a beacon light to guide others!

He was a good friend of mine. I offer my sincere condolences. May be, he would be reborn in the family to continue the mission he had pursued relentlessly!

★

## HOMAGE TO SHRI SADANAND SHEETY

by V. Shankar



The sad and sudden demise of Shri Sadanand Shetty on 23rd February 2007, came as a heartfelt blow. Shri Sadanand Shetty was a Life Member of the Sabha. He was a member of the Managing Committee from 1997-98 to 1999-2000 and from 2001 served as the Vice-President of the Sabha. He became a member of the Sabha during the most difficult time in its history when the Sabha was engaged in reconstructing the auditorium that was devastated and reduced to ruins by a ravaging fire that struck it on 28th February 1990. When the late Bharat Ratna Shri C. Subramaniam convened a meeting of well-wishers at the Raj Bhavan to identify ways and means to raise resources to rebuild the institution, it was the enthusiasm and the commitment of Shri Sadanand Shetty that was visible for all to see. Conscious of the pre-eminent status of the Sabha, he wanted every activity to reflect this position. He elevated the Bharat Ratna Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi Award from its original proposal to the one that portrays the significance of the award. Committed to increasing the membership base, he was in the forefront of the various drives that the Sabha initiated in the recent past.

Inclusion, he left behind a legacy, a memetic continuity of his ideals that grew beyond him. His success in life was not just about creating a definitive dogmatic end state but was about unfolding thought processes, of dialogue and continuum. Reconciliation of diverse thoughts was the fabric that he wove effectively in managing institutional affairs. Small wonder he had a large friendship base. Shri Shetty was a diehard Indian who visualized a beautiful order even out of the chaotic diversity. A born optimist, he believed in action and deliverables.

The end came to him as peacefully as the life journey of contentment that he led. Nearing journey's end, at the confluence of life and death, he continued to be cheerful and at peace with himself. An epitome of tranquility, he transited to eternity with as much grace as the life he led.

He will forever remain in our hearts and minds for the philanthropy and leadership qualities exhibited while holding the office of the Vice-President of the Sabha with great dignity and humility. May the Lord bestow upon us and upon his bereaved family members the fortitude and courage to bear this loss. May his soul rest in eternal peace and may he from his distant abode beyond, ensconced at the Lotus feet of the Great Master continue to guide us in the years ahead.

★

A man whose success was defined by his principles, his universalism and sense of

## HOMAGE TO Smt. MANGALAM MUTHUSWAMY

by Saipriya Viswanathan



Smt. Mangalam Muthuswamy's passing away on Saturday, the 9th of June, 2007, came as a shock to the music world.

Smt. Mangalam Muthuswamy was a performer and teacher par excellence. She was known for her passionate involvement with the Carnatic Veena, her strict adherence to the pure Tanjore style of playing the instrument and the sheer dexterity and depth displayed by her in the typical 'gayaki' style of Veena playing, involving the use of complicated *gamakas*, virtually making her Veena sing during her concerts! Her faithful observance to this tradition has won her acclaim from even great stalwarts of Carnatic music, such as Shri T.L. Venkatrama Iyer (ex-chairman of the Sangeeta Natak Academy), Smt. D.K. Pattammal, Shri Maharajapuram Santhanam, Shri Emani Sankara Sastry, Shri S. Balachander and Dr. V.V. Srivatsa. She was also well-versed on the Sitar.

Trained in the Veena Under the Gurukula system prevalent then, Smt. Mangalam Muthuswamy had her initial lessons from her

mother and famous artiste of her time, Smt. Lakshmbai Ammal. She then proceeded to continue her tutelage under Tanam expert, Smt. 'Veena' Visalakshi, a direct disciple of Shatkala Chakravarthi Veena Venkatramana Das of Vijayanagaram and Veena Dhanammal.

Smt. Muthuswamy was only 11 years old when she gave her first performance in the All India Radio. She is one of the few Vainikas who have had the distinction of being an 'A' grade artiste at the AIR and the Doordarshan as well.

Smt. Muthuswamy has had many performances, awards and titles to her credit. Most important performances included the Radio Sangeet Sammelan in 1994; a performance in the august presence of Shri R. Venkataraman, the then President of India; the NCPA, Mumbai; Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai and the Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer's Trust at Chennai. A recipient of the 'Sur Mani' award, she also conducted lecture-demonstrations on music, wrote articles for the Times of India and Shanmukha.

Smt. Mangalam Muthuswamy was a fine performer, whose deft fingering and ease while playing on her Veena could transport her audience to a totally different, higher level. Her mellifluous Veena could induce tears even in laymen who could not understand the finer nuances of classical music. Such was the sheer magic she held in her fingertips!

Smt. Mangalam Muthuswamy's biggest asset, though, was her ability to impart training in Veena to her many students. She had been a Veena teacher in the Bharatiya Music and Fine Arts Society for 10 years, after which she also served as a teacher in the Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya since 1986. She devised her own unique system of teaching and also successfully produced disciples who won awards in competitions and even gave stage concerts.

I have had the great good fortune of being her disciple for the past one and half decades. It has indeed been a pleasure to learn the great art from such a great Guru and a wonderful human being.

Very humble by nature and extremely affectionate towards each of us, 'Mami', as we fondly addressed her, was no different to us from our own family members. In spite of her high standing and amazing persona in the music field, Mami would come down to our level, talk and laugh with us, console us in times of trouble and even offer us a shoulder to cry on! Never harsh with her words, Mami would gently chide us for the little (and not-so-little) errors we made while playing, make us realize the true value of music and the correct attitude we had to develop in order to delve deeper into the ocean of music.

I recall the many times when she would have me at home for hours at a stretch, grooming me for a stage concert. I would practically live there with other students while preparing for a group programme. Mami never let us realize the strain it would cause her while

she selflessly laboured with us. We practically learnt Veena the play-way-class and it was always fun, even if it meant getting a good tongue-lashing from Mami once in a way!

Today, our beloved and most respected Mami is no more. We now yearn for her presence and wish we could get just one more moment with her, to thank her for the immense kindness and magnanimity she showed towards us. Words cannot express what she meant to us - the void left by her passing can indeed never be filled.

Of course, we students truly believe that Mami will be with us in spirit, to guide us through our onward musical journey and steady us whenever we falter. But it will never be the same again. We will sorely miss having all those conversations, laughter sessions, grooming sessions and what have you.

We will forever long for the touch of those loving hands on our fingers, guiding them along the frets, that mischievous smile playing on her lips when we struggled in vain with a difficult *pidi*, the tinkling laughter that broke out each time one of us won some acclaim . . . the memories are never-ending and shall live on forever within us

There is no way we can repay Mami for all that she had done for us. We can only pray that her soul rests in peace and that we are able, in our own small, humble way, to carry forward her luminous tradition of Veena playing.

BOOK REVIEW

# Sopanam - Kerala's Divine Music with Jayadeva's Geeta Govinda The Love Song

by Jyothi Mohan



**Geetha Radhakrishna**  
- the author

*She is a well-known exponent of Mohiniattam. She has also been trained in Sopanam style of singing, besides being a yoga practitioner, poet, writer and speaker. She has several choreographies to her credit and has performed all over the world.*

**1) Sopanam...Geeta Govinda...112 pages**

Published in 2002  
Revised Second Edition 2006  
Price: Rs.300

**2) Prakruti Nrityam - 88 pages**

Published in 2003  
Revised Second Edition 2006  
Price: Rs.120

Published by:

**MNK Charitable Trust,**  
501, Shiv Sadan, Gokhale Road,  
Dahanukar Wadi, Kandivli West,  
Mumbai-400 067.

Many of us who are deeply interested in classical music are only vaguely aware of Sopana Sangeetam. Geeta Radhakrishna's deep love for this form of soulful music has prompted her to demystify this rich musical heritage of Kerala.

She has traced the history of Sopana sangeetam and the association of poet Jayadeva's Geeta Govinda with Kerala in a

very lucid manner. She has dwelt upon the unique features of this form of music and explained how and where it is rendered as well. She has also given us an insight into the life of the poet Jayadeva and his wife Padmavathi, besides explaining how the Geeta Govinda reached the backwaters of Kerala. Interestingly, Jayadeva's Ashtapadi, which is extremely popular in Orissa and West Bengal has been woven into the traditional fabric of Kerala through Sopanam, so much so, that it is often believed that the two are synonymous.

Her translation of the Ashtapadis has done full justice to the lilting poetic beauty of Jayadeva. The choice of words and phrasing is highly aesthetic and brings out the spiritual love of Radha and Krishna without reducing it to a mundane translation of passion and eroticism. The bhava or emotional content is thus very carefully portrayed. She has also taken the trouble of finding and translating the 3 verses of the 10th ashtapadi, which are not found in several translated works.

Geeta's valuable effort is a boon for all dancers. Young dancers, who are not well versed in Sanskrit, will find the translation very useful while choreographing the Ashtapadis, as every word and every line of the songs has been translated faithfully. Often, we find, the presentation of the *bhava* of an Ashtapadi is at variance with the sentiment expressed by Jayadeva. This is due to a very superficial understanding of the import of the lyrics or due to poor comprehension of the context in which

the song is composed. To address these deficiencies, Geeta's book is an invaluable asset to the dance fraternity.

## Prakruti Nrityam

## The Dance of Nature

Geetha Radhakrishna's love for nature comes to the fore in her book of poems extolling nature. Each poem is special in a different way. Alliteration is used with remarkable effect. Flowers, birds and trees come alive in her beautiful poems. Her poem on *hastamudra* could be adapted for dance. The poem describing the graceful danseuse, brings

before your eyes, the dance of joy very beautifully. The poems on Mother Earth based on the *Ashtarasas* are indeed very unique, capturing the various sentiments artistically. Even the humble crow, in her poem, acquires a distinct, dignified personality.

An ardent feel for nature, grace and flow of words, with the background of classical dance, makes these poems remarkable. The lilting poetry should be read and enjoyed by young minds so that a love for nature will be instilled in them at an early age, for they need to protect their environment in the years to come. Prakruti Nrityam is indeed a fitting tribute to Mother Nature.

## "SHANMUKHA"

A Quarterly Publication of

"Sri Shanmukhananda Sabha"

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Life Members - India	-	Rs. 500.00
Annual (for 4 Issues)	-	Rs. 40.00
Annual for Foreign Subscribers	-	Rs. 500.00 Plus Rs 400 (Postage)
Price per Current Issue	-	Rs. 10.00
Price per Back Issue	-	Rs. 5.00

**SRI SHANMUKHANANDA FINE ARTS & SANGEETHA SABHA (Regd )**  
292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg, Sion (East), Mumbai - 400 022

Payment by Demand Draft in favour of  
**Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha**



## VEENAARPANAM A report by An ardent Veena Lover

A unique symposium devoted totally to veena, the queen of musical instruments in Carnatic Music was organised by Sri Kanchi Mahaswamy Peetharohana Shatabdi Mahotsav Trust and Bharatiya Music & Arts Society (BMAS) Mumbai on December 5, 2006 at Bharat Ratna Dr. M.S. Subbalakshmi Auditorium, Bharatiya Music & Fine Arts Society, Sion, Mumbai.

Designed to be a dual tribute – one to the glorious instrument and the other to the Mahaswami Jagadguru Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Swamigal, himself a veena player and an ardent lover of Carnatic music – the programme provided a platform for eminent musicians, a galaxy of veena artistes predominantly from Mumbai, students and music lovers to exchange, enlighten and engross themselves in various facets of the

musical instrument as also on the bond that existed between veena and Mahaswami.

In the one day event, the rich cadence of mellifluous melody emanated from an array of veenas and in a variety of form and texture – from solo concerts, group ensembles, to speeches and lecture demonstrations – and created an ambience of solemn musical milieu and festive gaiety.

The programme began with 'veenadhvani' presented by young Kumari Vidyanandi, a leading disciple of Smt. Mangalam Muthuswamy. Immediately thereafter the seminar was officially inaugurated with the traditional lighting of the lamp by the invited guests.

Welcoming the gathering Sri V Shankar, president, Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts &



Sangeetha Sabha and BMAS deliberated on veena's historical facets and on the bond that existed between the Mahaswamigal and veena

The kinship that existed between the Kanchi saint and veena was elaborated further by renowned Carnatic musician Shri Neyveli Santanagopalan. "Shri Periyavaa had many a time described the greatness of veena and how playing the veena can be efficiently coordinated with one's own Spiritual Saadhana to reach the ultimate goal of life, Moksha", he averred. Laced with interesting anecdotes and demonstrations, Shri Santanagopalan enlightened the audience on Periyavaal's deep knowledge of veena and Carnatic music.

The next speaker, Dr. Karaikudi S. Subramanian, founder of Brahadhvani focussed on various aspects of veena, the styles of playing the instrument as also on his own contributions towards popularising the instrument.

The performance session began with Paramacharya Pancharatna Haaram by Vidwan Smt. Kalyani Sharma, eminent Carnatic musician and ex-joint director of Shanmukhananda Sangeeta Vidyalaya, along with her disciples.

This musical composition on the Mahaswami, Jagadguru Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Swamigal, written by Smt. Lakshmi Raghavan, was set to tune and rhythm by Smt. Kalyani Sharma a la Saint Tyagaraja's Pancharatna Krithis in the five ghana ragas – Nattai, Goulai, Arabhi, Varali and Sri.

The group held the audience captive for about an hour with their melodious rendering, bringing out the instrument's original intonation and nuances without the aid of contact mikes.

The next ensemble was "Kamakshi Kritimala" presented by eminent vainika vidwan, Smt. Mangalam Muthuswamy and her disciples. The group enthralled the audience with compositions on Goddess Kamakshi interlaced with raga alapana, tanam and kalpana swaras. It was a treat of a different nature as here the artistes brought out the instrument's lilt with the use of contact mikes.

Both the groups were accompanied on the Mrudangam by Shri S. Shankaranaryanan and on the Ghatam by Shri R.C. Sekhar

The post lunch session began with a lecture demonstration on manufacturing, maintenance and repair of veena by Shri P. S. Sunil from Thiruvananthapuram. It was a very informative entertaining and interactive session where Shri Sunil answered queries raised by the audience

This was followed by a rare and refreshing presentation by Smt Shyamala Sajani a well-known veena artiste. She presented Hindustani music on veena, which is generally considered compatible only to Carnatic music. Accompanied on the tabla by Shri Gaurang Mallapur, Smt Sajani presented a composition of Guni Gandharva Lakshman Prasad Jaipurvale in Hamsadwani raga followed by a Mira bhajan in Raag Mand.

In the evening session five senior veena artistes of Mumbai - Shri C. K. Shankaranarayana Rao, Smt. Kalyani Sharma, Smt. Mangalam Muthuswamy, Smt. Janaki Rangan and Smt. Bagawati Mani - were felicitated in the presence of His Holiness Sri Jayendra Saraswathi, Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham

The seminar culminated with an enchanting veena concert by Vidushi Smt. Jayanti Kumaresh.

## MAHASWAMI SANGEETHANJALI



Sangeethanjali to Mahaswami Chandrasekarendra Saraswati Swamigal is performed by an eminent artiste every year in December, to commemorate the event of naming the Shanmukhananda Sabha auditorium as Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi auditorium.

Mahaswami's 6th Sangeethanjali was rendered by Shri Trichur V. Ramachandran, in the presence of H.H. Pujyasri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamigal, 69th Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham. Having received his early training under Shri Varkala Subramania Bhagavathar and Shri Tripunithura R. Krishna Iyer, he then came under the tutelage of the maestro, Shri G.N. Balasubramaniam and later Smt. M. L. Vasanthakumari.

## SRI SHANMUKHANANDA NATIONAL EMINENCE AWARD

The Sri Shanmukhananda National Eminence Award was conferred on the living legend of Santoor, Pt. Shivkumar Sharma on Sunday, the 10th December 2006.

felicitation address by His Excellency, Shri S.M. Krishna, Governor of Maharashtra.

### Pt. Shivkumar Sharma

The award, which carries a cash prize of Rs.1 Lakh, a citation, a silver lamp and a bronze Shanmukha Icon, was instituted to honour veterans in the field of fine arts as well as emerging stars.

With his creative genius, Pt. Shivkumar Sharma, the Santoor Wizard, has created a new genre of instrumental music. Through his performance career of over half a century, he has created millions of new listeners and ardent fans of Indian Classical Music. His



Three subsidiary awards, carrying the title, 'Shanmukha Sangeetha Shiromani' and consisting of a cash prize of Rs. 25,000/- a citation and a bronze Shanmukha Icon were conferred on Bombay Jayashri Ramnath, Sikkil Mala Chandrasekhar and Omkar Dadarkar.

The reading of citations and presentation of awards was preceded by the welcome address by Shri V. Shankar, President, SSFA & SS and

performances are such a brilliant combination of rich knowledge, perfect skill and abundant spontaneous creativity, that all the sections of listeners feel enriched. Little surprise that his concerts are awaited by connoisseurs, music students, musicians and lay listeners alike.

A world famous artiste, one who has been decorated with several titles and awards, Pt. Shivkumar Sharma, a musician par excellence,

is a great composer, a tolerant and kind guru, all rolled into one great personality. Santoor has become synonymous with his name. The world of music will be ever indebted to him for his invaluable contribution in enriching its quality and widening its expanse.

#### **Bombay Jayashri Ramnath**

A versatile Carnatic musician, Bombay Jayashri Ramnath has been groomed by Sri Lalgudi G. Jayaraman and Smt. T. R. Balamani. She represents her family's fourth generation of musicians and has been performing for over two decades. She has carried on the Lalgudi tradition, evolving a distinct style of her own.

Her love for other classical art forms has led her to dialogue with renowned musicians and dancers besides interacting with internationally renowned artistes.

She has the rare privilege of being the first classical performer in the Opera House in Durban, The Russian Opera House in Helsinki, Finland, Casa da musica, Portugal and Les Orientals Festival, France.

#### **Sikkil Mala Chandrasekhar**

Flautist Sikkil Mala Chandrasekhar continues in the tradition of her famous gurus, the Sikkil Sisters - Kunjumani and Neela. In playing style, Mala combines the strongest aspects of both Kunjumani's clear classic lines with Neela's flair

and expressiveness. Other major influences on Mala's playing are the expertise and repertoire of noted vocalist and teacher Radha Viswanathan and of Radha's mother and guru Bharat Ratna Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi, whose family Mala joined by marriage.

Mala continues to perform throughout India and abroad. She is recognized as one of the most gifted exponents of Carnatic music of her generation and one of its top ranking flautists.

#### **Shri Omkar Dadarkar**

Shri Omkar Dadarkar represents the younger generation of musicians who relentlessly strive to maintain their originality and tradition despite the hectic environs of modern society. Inspired by parents Shri Shrikant Dadarkar and Smt. Shubhada Dadarkar, Omkar had the privilege of learning from his aunt, Vocalist Padmashri Manik Verma, and later from Pt. Yashwantbua Joshi of Gwalior Gharana under the Guru-Shishya parampara scheme of Dadar-Matunga Cultural Centre.

A scholar of I.T.C. Sangeet Research Academy, he also had the privilege of receiving guidance from illustrious gurus like Pt. Ulhas Kashalkar, Vidushi Girijadevi and Srinivas Khale. His handsome voice with embellished tans is gradually establishing Omkar as a brilliant performer in the world of Indian Classical Music.



## **HAPPENINGS AT THE VIDYALAYA – A Report**

by **NALINI DINESH**

### **Saraswathi Pooja and Vijayadashami celebrations 1st and 2nd Oct. 2006**

Saraswathi pooja was celebrated at the Vidyalyaya with a pooja, followed by a recital of Navaratri kritis by the disciples of Kalyani Sharma.

The Vijayadashami celebration was memorable, with all the teachers and students of the Vidyalyaya (vocal and instrumental inclusive) singing together, the first Sarali Varisai, Pillaiyar geetham, Varaveena and Shri Saraswathi, in Essar Hall. Thereafter, everyone adjourned to the class-rooms to learn the customary new lesson. New admission process was also on simultaneously, and the newly admitted students were started off on their musical journey with their first lesson.

### **Music Competitions**

The Annual Music Competition has been an important promotional programme of the Vidyalyaya and is much sought after by students of music from all parts of the country. During the year there were 45 prize winners out of 110 eligible entries for 29 endowments, both from Carnatic and Hindustani streams. There were 27 students of our Vidyalyaya who participated in 13 competitions in the year 2006 - 07 as against 7 students in 8 competitions during the last year i.e. 2005 - 06. 3 students bagged 5 prizes in 2006 - 07. The Vidyalyaya has a broad base of 46 group headings against "Endowments and Memorial Prizes". The last year's Music competition prizes were awarded by Smt. Seetha Rajan on 12.11.2006.

### **Tyagaraja Aradhana**

Members of the Vidyalyaya and other musicians of Mumbai rendered the Pancharatna kritis at

Essar Hall on Bahula Panchami day on 8th Jan 2007 at Essar Hall. Earlier in the morning, there was an unchavritti, led by Shri Udayalur Kalyanaraman.

This was a precursor to another mega event – the Thyagaraja Aradhana on 14th Jan 2007, in which musicians / members of sister organizations of Shanmukhananda Sabha also participated in the rendition of Pancharatna kritis led by vidwan Shri Neyveli Santhanagopalan.

### **Lec-Dem on Dance**

A lecture-demonstration entitled 'Understanding Bharatanatyam', presented by Ms Jyothi Mohan at the Essar Hall on 5 Mar 2007, was appreciated by well over a hundred people. Twenty seven of her students demonstrated the entire margam of Bharatanatyam, starting from the initial adavus, through alarippu, varnam down to the thillana. The recorded music was of high quality. Navarasas and the important features of abhinaya were also demonstrated. The programme ended with demonstration of hasta mudras and movement of the upangas.

Judging from the positive reaction of the children of the Vidyalyaya and their parents, it can well be said that the lec-dem succeeded in its objective – that of creating interest in the art form and to prevent dropouts as time progresses.

### **Scholarship Awards**

The scholarship awards for the year 2005-2006 were given to 66 students of the Sangeetha Vidyalyaya by our President Sri V. Shankar on 31st March 2007.

**Vaggeyakara Day Celebrations Nov. 2006 – April 2007**

Glad to be back with a report on the Vaggeyakara celebrations that are organized at least every other month, with a view to explore some of the treasures left to us by great composers past and contemporary. There's a lot to cover in this issue and I've tried to give more value to my readers than a laundry list of kritis sung, hope you all agree!

**Muthuswamy Dikshitar day on 4th November, 2006**

Smt. Kamakshi Raman gave a crisp recital of Dikshitar kritis, with depth and feeling. The enthusiasm and energy of the lady was infectious and her attempt to bring out the beauty of the compositions, sincere. Kritis like Sri Ranganatham in Poornachandrika raagam, Sree Ramaa Saraswathi in Naasamani raagam and Tripurasundari in Sama raagam were some lesser-heard kritis in her recital.

Kum. Vidyandhi N. presented a melodious veena recital starting with Vallabha in Begada, going onto Kamalamba in Anandabhairavi, Sivakameshwarim in Kalyani among others, and concluding with the peppy Shyamale Meenakshi in Shankarabharanam.

Shri. Puducode Venkiteswaran presented major kritis of Dikshitar which are known to bring out the essence of each raga, like Karikalabhamukham in Saaveri, Rajagopalam in Mohanam, Mamava Meenakshi in Varaali, Shri Krishnam in Todi among others and concluding with Dikshitar's raagamalika magnum opus Sri Vishwanatham.

The artistes were accompanied by Shri Ashwin Venkataraman on the violin and Shri Navneet Venkatesan on the mridangam and the program was compered by Ms. Kaveri Anantaraman.

**Bharatiyar day on 16th Dec. 2006**

There was a special celebration planned by the Sangeetha Vidyalaya, to commemorate the birth anniversary of this great Tamil poet, in association with the Bharati Medical and Research foundation. The 1st year KVC diploma students presented some of his songs with varied themes like Nature (Iyarkkai padalgal), devotional (Deivappadalgal), spiritual (Gnanappadalgal), Kuruvippattu, Kannan Paattu and Mahabharatha. The participants were Smt. Parvathi Shankarnarayanan, Smt. Praveena G, Kum. Pushpa Anantharaman, Kum. Kaveri Anantharaman, Kum. Abarna Balan and Smt. Rajeshwari V. The accompanists, also belonging to the Vidyaalaya, were Shri N. Srikanth on the violin, Shri Krishnan on the flute, Shri Pannalal Banerjee on the harmonium and Sangeeth Venkiteswaran on the mridangam. Smt. Nalini Dinesh anchored the show.

This presentation was followed by a concert by noted vocalist Smt Gayatri Girish. It was interesting to hear Bharatiyar songs tuned to highly classical and rakti ragas like Bilahari and Poorvikalyani and it is a testimony to the artiste's caliber that she was able to make a wholesome concert entirely of Bharatiyar's compositions. The highlight of her concert was the moving viruttham set to varied ragas, with different flavors and textures, sung with an amazing felicity of expression.

**Purandaradasa & Annamacharya day on 20th Jan. 2007**

Bangalore Shri T. N. Ashok regaled the audience with his racy presentation of Purandaradasa and Annamacharya compositions. There was not a dull moment in his 2 hrs. performance which included Haridasa in Arabhi with crisp kalpana swaras and Odi Baraiyya Vaikunta in Bhairavi with neraval at a very catchy part of the song – Naadi muththadi maaththadi santhoshadi. A highlight

of the concert was Shri Purandaragurum, a composition on Purandaradasa by his guru Vidwan Shri Bellary M. Sheshagiri Achar, in Haradini raagam (janyam of Vachaspathi, mela 64) with arohanam-avarohanam sgmpns, snpmgs.

Purandaradasa songs prove endearing to all kinds of audiences due to their simple and yet profound and beautiful lyrics. An example of this was Rama nama payasage Krishna nama chakkarage.

Ashok was ably supported by Shri S.V. Ramachandran on the violin and Shri K.N. Venkateswaran on the mridangam. Smt. Praveena Gouthaman gave brief descriptions of the composers and their works.

**Shyama Shastri day on 17th March, 2007**

This vaggeyakara's compositions are a study in contrast, to the preceding composers – the jackfruit as opposed to grapes, so to speak – the sweetness in both types of "fruits" being the deep abiding bhakthi and immovable faith in the Supreme Being. The hard, spiky, leathery covering of the jackfruit can be likened to the slow gait, the Ghana ragas and tricky setting of the lyrics to varied taalās in Shyama Shastri compositions. But if one can get past this veneer, one would be overwhelmed with the fragrance and taste of the fruit within! Slices of this fruit were served up by Smt. Gauri Sundaram, Shri S. Srinivasan and Smt. Sugandha Atreya accompanied on the violin by Shri Kartik Balakrishnan and mridangam by Shri A.L. Nath. Smt. Sita Ganesh compered the evening's programme.

It is to be noted that only a small number of compositions of this great composer are available with us today, and out of this number, only a few are commonly being taught by gurus. This poses a unique challenge to organizers of Shyama Shastri days, in terms of avoiding repetition of kritis by singers. This

challenge was met admirably by the participants of this Shyama Shastri day, as special efforts were made to learn rarer kritis.

Gauri's presentation was marked by some lesser-heard kritis like Shripatimukha in Saaveri, Enneramum un Naamam in Poorvi Kalyani and Enneramum un Pada Kamalam in Punnagavaraali.

Srinivasan rendered the Todi swarajathi Raave Himagiri, which mostly dwells in the lower octave, very well. His other presentations were Tharunam Idamma in Goulipanthu, Devi brova in the single-kriti raga Chintamani, Kanaka Shaila Viharini in Punnaga varaali and Karuna Jooda in Sri raagam.

Smt. Sugandha gave a neat presentation of his popular kritis like Sarojadala Netri, Shankari Samkuru, Marivere, Himadrisuthe and Nannubrovu Lalithe in a resonant voice aligned perfectly to shruti.

**Patnam Subramanya Iyer, Poochi Sreenivasa Iyengar, Muthaiah Bhagavathar, Mysore Vasudevachar & other contemporary composers' day on 31st March, 2007**

Smt. Bhavani Balasubramanian and Smt. Bhamu Ramakrishnan's presentation included lesser-heard kritis of the above contemporary composers, with impeccable, authentic pathantaram, learnt under the tutelage of Bombay S. Ramachandran. The kritis were Lambodara in Kamboji and Na chei vidavadura in Nattakurunjii of Mysore Vasudevachar, Ninnu jeppa in Mandari of Patnam Subramanya Iyer, Raghunatha in Swara Ranjani of Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar, Kamalasani in Kalyani of GNB, Ramaneedasudane in Malavi of Spencer Venugopal, Sarasadala in Saramathi of Muthaiah Bhagavathar and Vani ninnu in Surutti of Pallavi Sessa Iyer.

Smt. Vijayalakshmi Gokulachandran sang 2

Lalita Dasar compositions, Pavanaguru in Hamsanandi and Chamundeshwari in Chandrakauns in addition to the composers mentioned above.

Smt. Shyamala Gopalakrishnan's strong and confident presentation included Ganapathiye, a Lalitha Dasar composition, among other popular compositions like Brochevarevarura, Sudhamayi, and Marivere.

Accompanists for the day were Ms. Apurva Swaminathan on the violin and Shri V.R. Narayanan on the mridangam and the compere was Ms. Parvathi Shankarnarayanan.

#### Swati Tirunal day on 21st April 2007

Ms. Lakshmi U. Menon and Ms. Kavitha Vinod Elayath presented some popular Swati Tirunal compositions like Sumasaayaka in Karnataka Kapi, Kripaya palaya in Charukeshi, the Raagamaalika composition Pannagendra Shayana and Alarshara parithaapam in Surutti.

Mast. Rohit Prasad's presentation was enthusiastic with kritis like Smarasada in

Bilahari and Paramananda in Kedaram.

Smt. Muthulakshmi Vedanarayanan's stylish performance was replete with bhaava and was a performance in the true sense of the word. Her kritis were embellished with a number of sangatis, (some with a strong Hindustani flavour, in keeping maybe, with the eclectic and broad-minded composer-king being celebrated that day), spontaneous improvisations, airs & graces, especially in the Hamsanandi piece Shankara Shrigiri which was rendered to mark the occasion of Shankara Jayanti. The second Navarathri kriti of the day, Devi Pavane in Saaveri (the other one Saroruhasana in Pantuvaraali was rendered by Rohit), the beautiful Seve Srikantham, the kurunji padam Aliveni were some of her other offerings.

Master Tejasvi S provided violin support and Ms Poornima Krishnan provided percussion support on the mridangam. Ms. Abarna Balan anchored the evening's programme.



### BUDDING TALENT

Rohit Prasad's mridangam arangetram held on February 18th 2007 at the Sivaswamy Auditorium of Chembur Fine Arts was well attended. Padmasri Dr. N. Ramani delighted the audience with the flute while Rohit impressed with his masterly strokes on the mridangam. Sri K. Sivakumar's brilliant accompaniment on the violin and Sri Shankar Lakshman's able support on the ghatam added to the beauty of the concert.

Student of the widely acclaimed mridangam vidwan Sri T. S. Nandakumar and a meritorious student of the Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya, Rohit did his Guru and Vidyalaya proud with his accuracy and finesse. He won praise for his maiden performance from Sri V. Shankar, President of the Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha, Sri Ganeshkumar, President of Fine Arts Society, Chembur and all other dignitaries and artistes who were present at the function.